

AN ANALYSIS OF AN AFRICAN LIFE CYCLE
AS A BRIDGE FOR REPRODUCING MALAGASY CHRISTIAN LEADERS
IN THE CONTEXT OF EVANGELISM, DISCIPLESHIP AND LEADERSHIP

A THESIS-PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

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MAY 2011

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I dedicate this book to Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank:

My Malagasy friends and co-workers who answered and translated many research questions and clarified their local customs.

My team of editors including the Rev. Dr. Howard Hess, Dr. Peg Hess, Emily Nell Lagerquist, Kara Schaeffler, Laura Verinder, Syd Verinder and Ken Wenzel.

To my mentors, Dr. Robert Coleman who encouraged me and initiated my participation in this doctoral program and Dr. David Currie who saw my potential for writing a book for African leaders.

My family, especially my lovely wife who persistently challenged me and booked my schedule so that I could complete this project. To Corban and Charese who love me, hug me and tell me "You can do it, Dad!"

ABSTRACT

This paper presents an African Model for reproducing Malagasy Christian leaders in the context of evangelism, discipleship and leadership development. It is in the African cycle of life that a connection is developed between the key components (relationships, instructions, covenants, traditions and interventions) in the traditional rites of passage (birth, initiation, marriage, eldership, and death/burial) and a methodology of reproducing Christian leaders. Using biblical evidence as the basis for evangelism, discipleship and leadership development, the author interviews Malagasy traditional priests on Malagasy rites of passage and implements the African Model as a means for reproducing Malagasy Christian leaders by using the key components integrated in the program. These biblical mandates coupled with these key components are necessary to bring revival back into the church and fulfill the Great Commission of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER I THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

A mother has just delivered her first child, and while she and the baby rest, the father is at the office celebrating and delivering gifts to his co-workers and friends. The atmosphere is full of excitement and celebration as everyone welcomes the newborn child. The life of the infant has begun, but the responsibility is not over for the parents. They must remain diligent in the life of the child, and for many years to come, the parents and the community will play a vital role in the child's development.

The same is true in the Christian life. When a person becomes a new Christian, it is not uncommon to share this news with others in celebration. People welcome the new Christian into the community of faith, and the community is excited and wants to celebrate. However, this spiritual birth is just the beginning. The church leaders have the on-going responsibility to educate, equip and empower the newborn spiritual baby. Just as parents are responsible for bringing up children, Christian leaders are responsible for raising up new Christians. Just as a mother would not leave her newborn child to feed itself, the church must also not abandon the newborn members who have come to faith.

In the African context, tremendous church growth has occurred over the past forty years. This is exciting, but one shortfall remains. An African proverb says: Christians are a mile long but only an inch deep. There are many Christians in Africa, but they

often lack spiritual maturity. There is insufficient nurturing and reproduction of capable, deep-rooted, mature African Christian leaders within an indigenous African context. Due to modernization and westernization, the African church has adopted a process foreign to its culture. However, in more recent years, African theologians have begun looking at and developing African Christian theology.

Does an African life cycle provide a means for reproducing Malagasy Christian leaders who are intentional about evangelism, discipleship, and leadership development? More specifically, does the Eklesia Episkopaly Malagasy (The Malagasy Episcopal Church) provide a bridge for reproducing godly leaders who are effective and consistent in evangelism, discipleship, and leadership development?

Christian Global Population Shift

The Christian global population has shifted over the past 50 years. There has been a significant shift geographically from the Global North to the Global South.¹ “The era of Western Christianity has passed within our lifetimes, and the day of Southern

¹ Todd M. Jonson and Sandra S. Kim, “The Changing Demographics of World Christianity” (special report presented at the annual American Academy Religion sub group on World Christianity 2006), 1.

Christianity is dawning. The fact of change itself is undeniable; it has happened, and will continue to happen.”² In 1960, 58% of the Christian population was living in the Global North/Western world. Within 30 years (1990) it had decreased to 32%. One African Scholar at Yale has said, “After the Colonial Period, Africa has become, or is becoming, a Christian continent in cultural as well as numerical terms, while on the same scale the West has become, or is rapidly becoming, a post-Christian society.”³

In 2000, more than 60% of all Christians were from Asian, African and Latin American countries.⁴ One example of the growth increase is seen in terms of continental shifts. On an average day, there are 24,000 new Christians in Africa, 21,000 in Latin America and 19,400 in Asia⁵ Africa has been affected significantly. In 1900, 9.2% of the Africa population was Christian. In 2000, the percentage had grown to 45.9%. The population grew 626% in that period, while Christianity grew by 3,500%.⁶ Jenkins believes Africa will have the most significant growth from 2000-2025, increasing from 360 million to 633 million Christians; Africa then will have increased from 18% to 24%

² Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: the Coming of the Global Christianity* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007), 3.

³ Lamin Sanneh, *Whose Religion is Christianity? The Gospel Beyond the West* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 36.

⁴ Michael Jaffarian, “The Demographics of World Religions Entering the 21st Century,” in *Between Past and Future*, ed. J. Bonk (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2003), 257-258.

⁵ David Barrett, Todd Johnson, George Kurian, *The Status of Christianity and Religions in the Modern World, World Christian Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1-3.

⁶ Jaffarian, “The Demographics of World Religions Entering the 21st Century,” 255, 260-261.

of the world's Christians.⁷ As Christianity moves globally south, this reinforces the ancient roots of Christianity in Africa.

Global Theological Shift

There has not only been a geographical shift, but also a theological shift. The western world is no longer dictating the theological supremacy and dominance of the modern era. African Theology has seen resurgence in Ghana, South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria. Todd Johnson and others have suggested that there is a major global theological shift from Northern Christians to Southern Christians. As a result, this will challenge the North's dominance in theology and ecclesiology by producing their own reflections and practices, hearkening back to the earliest Christian centuries when they were in the majority.⁸

Africans have begun to develop their own theology from an African perspective with contributions from theologians such as Mbiti, Muzorewa, Kurewa, Kwesi, Tutu, Pobee and Sanneh. One African theologian has suggested that "African theology [is] the study that seeks to reflect upon and express the Christian faith in African thought-forms

⁷ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: the Coming of the Global Christianity* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007), 2-3.

⁸ Todd M. Johnson, "World Trends Update 2007," August 2007, <http://www.lausanneworldpulse.com/766/08-2007?pg=all> (accessed March 3, 2010).

and idiom as it is experienced in African Christian communities, and always in dialogue with the rest of Christendom.”⁹

African theologians are increasing in number and are progressing in writing additional African theologies. However, the lack of finances, available technology, and networking has made it harder for African theologians to publish their materials and thereby assist the growth of the indigenous theologies.

The History of Anglican Ministry: Context in Madagascar

The roots of the Anglican Church in Madagascar were formed when the bishop of Mauritius, the Rt. Rev. Vincent W. Ryan, D.D., started reading the two volumes of *The History of Madagascar* by Mr. William Ellis (1855). Mr. Ellis was an English missionary teacher with the London Missionary Society who personally taught King Rakoto Radama during the 1850s. Bishop Ryan was impressed with the Malagasy who lived in Mauritius. While living in Mauritius, he saw they had “fervent zeal” regarding worship and reading the Scriptures and therefore decided to build a chapel and dedicated it to the Malagasy in 1860 in Morne (Mauritius). In 1861, positive changes occurred for the Christians living in Madagascar. After 25 years of suffering persecution and martyrdom, Queen Ranaivalo I died and her son Prince Rakoto Radama came to power.

⁹ John Kurewa, "The Meaning of African Theology," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 11:36.

The new King Radama invited the missionaries to return to Madagascar. Bishop Ryan saw these events as an opportunity to conduct an official visit representing the Queen of England to give a present to King Radama in 1864. His intentions were clear from the start. He wanted to visit the King, tell him his plans and receive his approval for sending additional missionaries to Madagascar. He also wanted to ascertain how much work the Protestant missionaries were already doing because he did not intend to interfere with their work. He was looking for other opportunities to work in Madagascar, to ascertain what was needed for that to happen, and to discuss the possibility of sending missionaries to Madagascar.¹⁰

At the same time, the London Missionary Society and Bishop Ryan from the Anglican Church in Mauritius invited The Church Missionary Society (CMS) to join them in the work in Madagascar under two conditions: 1) that the CMS not work in the capital of Antananarivo but on the east coast and 2) that the CMS not send a resident Bishop.¹¹ In 1863/64, the Church Missionary Society sent two missionaries to Vohemar,

¹⁰ Vincent W. Ryan, *Mauritius and Madagascar: Journals of An Eight Years Residence in the Diocese of Mauritius, and of a Visit to Madagascar* (London: Sheeley, Jackson, and Halliday, 1864), Chapter VI 1-2.

¹¹ A Statement Respecting the Madagascar Mission of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, 21st July 1871, found in the Canterbury Project. <http://anglicanhistory.org/africa/mg/statement1871.html> (accessed May 11, 2010).

the Rev. Thomas Campbell and the Rev. H. Maundrell.¹²

A missionary society from England was also preparing its entry into Madagascar, The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG), working directly under the auspices of the Madagascar mission spearheaded by the Archbishop of Canterbury. They initially sent two missionaries in 1863 with instructions to begin work in Tamatave. During the first ten years, additional missionaries were sent. One of them died, another was disabled and a third was partnering with a local catechist to oversee 10 congregations in 1871.¹³ Even though they were commissioned in 1863, it was not until 1864/65 that they arrived in Madagascar.¹⁴ Unfortunately, CMS and SPG disagreed on the issue of a resident bishop living in Madagascar and this led to CMS pulling their missionaries out of Madagascar in 1874.¹⁵

Other key events impacted the history of the Anglican Church in Madagascar. The first came as a result of Bishop Ryan's impressions on his first visit to Madagascar in 1864. He felt that the Great Commission was imperative for the church and the world. He felt obligated to explain the reasons why he was going to Madagascar to his congregation at the cathedral in Mauritius. He preached a sermon on the Great

¹² G.L. King, *A Self Made Bishop: The Story of John Tsizehena, Bishop of the North D.D.* (London: Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, 1933), Chapter III: Servant of God.

¹³ A Statement Respecting the Madagascar Mission of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, 21st July 1871, Canterbury Project.

¹⁴ Rev. A Chiswell, "Church Missions in Madagascar" *Mission Life*, Vol III (London: Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, 1872), 283-286, 322-328.

¹⁵ Kestell-Cornish, *Journal of a Tour of Exploration in the North of Madagascar* (London: Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, 1877), 1.

Commission based on Matthew 28:18-20. He stressed the importance of following this passage: “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey all that I have commanded.”

The second event focused on the importance of the Bible in the life of the Malagasy Anglican Church. Whether the British government had political motives or not, the governor of Mauritius gave Bishop Ryan a Bible signed by the Queen of England to give as a gift to King Radama upon his arrival. Before Bishop Ryan arrived in Antananarivo, he spent some time on the east coast in Tamatave speaking and preaching to the local Malagasy. The local Malagasy Christians were excited to receive Bishop Ryan and showed their appreciation through gifts, including a number of geese and fowl. Feeling he had to return the favor, the Bishop asked them what they needed most. They responded quickly with a sense of urgency in their voices saying, “Bible, Bible, Bible.”¹⁶ From the beginning of the Anglican Mission in Madagascar, the Great Commission was the compelling force, and the availability of the Bible was seen as necessary for survival for Malagasy Anglicans.

One other important event in the development of the Anglican Church in Madagascar is the story of John Tsizehena, the self-proclaimed Bishop of the north in Madagascar. Bishop John was one of the first Anglican converts to Jesus Christ when he

¹⁶ Vincent W. Ryan, *Mauritius and Madagascar: Journals of An Eight Years Residence in the Diocese of Mauritius, and of a Visit to Madagascar* (London: Sheeley, Jackson, and Halliday, 1864), Chapter VI 1-3.

was baptized on April 27, 1864 by the new Church Missionary Society missionaries in Vohemar.¹⁷ After the CMS missionaries left in 1874 over a dispute with the SPG missionaries, it became apparent that there was no one to lead the churches in the north. There seemed to be a void in Vohemar for about 8 years until John returned in 1882/83 and called his fellow Christians together and proclaimed himself as their Bishop, “The Rt. Rev. Lord Bishop of the North, D.D.”¹⁸

What is so remarkable about Bishop John’s story is that he was able to do the work of an apostle, evangelist, preacher, pastor and teacher without any formal education or any material or financial assistance from the Anglican Church after the departure of CMS missionaries. He was a gifted leader in northern Madagascar and demonstrated his apostolic ministry by reproducing leaders. Almost a dozen of them were ordained by him and remained committed to at least four things: 1) the Anglican way of worship; 2) the primacy of the Bible in their lives; 3) evangelistic zeal; and 4) the commitment to serve Christ under any conditions. Bishop King, the writer of Bishop John’s short biography, said that his followers truly knew their Bible and their lives were held out to serving Christ in the purest way. There was no complaint of lack of zeal among his followers. During the period from 1885-1912, Bishop John, as a local Malagasy, was able to do more in reproducing leaders in the rural area of Vohemar than the well-funded, well-

¹⁷ King, *A Self Made Bishop*, Chapter III: Servant of God.

¹⁸ King, *A Self Made Bishop*, Chapter III: Servant of God.

educated, well-established and oldest Anglican Missionary Society, The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

Bishop King explains it this way:

His disciples were carrying on his work. His principles of sturdy loyalty to the Church of England had born their proper fruit. The spirit of fraternity in his churches was still strong. Of those whom he had made priests and deacons, two were now invalid priests' orders, and the rest were working happily as lay leaders under them. Above all else there was still manifest a strong zeal to evangelize the heathen, a sturdy independence of faith and character, and a real love for Christ.¹⁹

Bishop Dr. O'Ferral, the successor of Bishop King after he became the secretary of the Society of the Propagation for the Gospel, said it this way:

The northern church is quite inexplicable except by the belief in the Holy Spirit. Theoretically, I go there to help but actually I spend my time wondering and learning. What I admire most is the devotion of these clergy and also their simplicity. They are true missionaries, ready to move at any time and for any length of time, as the Spirit guides the decisions of their meetings. It was decided that Benjamin, one of our deacons, should go up to the college of St. Paul to test his vocation for the priesthood. Within 48 hours he was ready to leave, for an indefinite time and perhaps never to work in that part of the country again. With a church like this anything is possible.²⁰

¹⁹ King, *A Self Made Bishop*.

²⁰ King, *A Self Made Bishop*, Chapter VII: Aftermath.

Recent Local Ministry Context

Things have changed drastically since then. The Anglican Malagasy became part of the newly created Province of the Indian Ocean in 1973. At this time the Anglican Malagasy became officially known as the Eklesia Episkopaly Malagasy (E.E.M.) and was officially recognized as a religious body by the government.

In more recent years, E.E.M. has increased its number of leaders. There are more bishops, priests, deacons, and laity than at any other time in its history. In 1991, there were fewer than 45 clergy. In 2006 the governing body of the Eklesia Episkopaly Malagasy reported to the World Council of Churches that they had 115 clergy; in 2008 there were 129 clergy²¹. This means there has been an increase of 84 clergy between 1991 and 2008. In 1991, there was only one part-time evangelist serving in the diocese of Antananarivo. In 2008, they had 18 evangelists serving mostly in full-time positions.²² Yet one shortfall remains: a lack of vision in reproducing Christian leaders at the local level.

²¹ Provansa Eklesiatikan'ny Ranomasimbe Indiana, *Lectionnaire, Kalendara sy Diary 2009* (Antananarivo: Impremiere 2000, 2010), 124-145.

²² Provansa Eklesiatikan'ny Ranomasimbe Indiana, *Lectionnaire, Kalendara sy Diary 2009*, 135-137.

In terms of the laity growth during this same period, the Eklesia Episkopaly Malagasy laity had increased from 200,000 to 400,000-500,000 members in 2010.²³ Yet there is a lack of programs in the Anglican Church to help the laity grow spiritually. The growth in the number of clergy and laity has been impressive over the past 20 years. However, these numbers could be even higher, and the spirituality of the Christians needs to deepen.

Theological Education Lacks Consistency and Commitment to Reproducing Christian Leaders

Theological education has struggled during the past 20 years in the E.E.M. Due to lack of funding, education, commitment, motivation, and continuity, and a shortfall of creative alternatives, the standard of Anglican theological education has declined. E.E.M. has struggled in finding continuity in leadership for theological education. For example, there is only one Anglican theological college, St. Paul's Theological College in Ambatoharanana, used to train future clergy in the entire country; since 1987, the college has had seven principals (Bishop Donald Smith 1987-1990, Rev. Flaurant Ravelonorana 1990-1995, Rev. Vincent Rakotoarisoa 1996-2000, Rev. Alphege Rakotovao 2000-2002, Rev. Jean Baptiste Jaomandiny 2002-2008, The Rt. Rev. Dr. Todd McGregor (Interim) 2008-2009, Dr. Michel Razafiarivony 2009-present). With

²³ World Council of Churches Report 2006, <http://www.oikoumene.org/gr/member-churches/regions/africa/madagascar/church-of-the-province-of-the-indian-ocean.html> (accessed March 1, 2010).

this constant infusion of new ideas and viewpoints, each principal has come with his own agenda and curriculum. In the 1990s the college began to implement some curriculum on evangelism since it had been announced by Lambeth Conference in 1988 to be the decade of evangelism. Immediately after this announcement there was progress in starting new churches in remote areas. However, during the last 10 years, the college has neglected the focus on evangelism. The reason was not because of the E.E.M. did not want to go in that direction, but rather because there was no tutor specialized in that area.

Another area of weakness in the college is discipleship. Since 1990, the college has never offered a single course on disciple making, mentoring or reproducing leaders. In 2008, most of the curriculum focused too much on the languages (Malagasy, French, English, Hebrew, and Greek). Why all this focus on languages when a great percentage of Malagasy still cannot read or write? There seemed to be an adequate amount of Anglican studies and ethos, but what was missing was biblical theology, evangelism, discipleship and leadership development. The emphasis was on learning languages and Anglican studies, and not on reproducing Christian leaders. The college students/future leaders are taught the catechism but the traditional catechism does not provide content for reproducing Christian leaders. Thus, a huge void remains in the training.

Some Lay Training Programs Lack Equipping in Discipleship and a Model for Reproducing Christian Leaders

Another concern is the limited provision of adult lay training in E.E.M. Each diocese has been left to create and develop its own program. Some have been more successful than others in starting adult lay training programs. Some dioceses have not started any programs. All of these programs are focused on training people to become leaders in the church, such as evangelists, shepherds, catechists or even priests. Evangelists are trained to convert people to Christianity; shepherds (*mpiandry*) are taught how to pray for those who are demon possessed by evil spirits; catechists are taught some basic theology and how to lead a service; and priests are taught theology, the Bible and how to run a church. None of these programs are devoted to training lay people in order to reproduce church leaders.

The Diocese of Antananarivo appears to have noticed this void. In 1997 the Synod of the Diocese of Antananarivo approved SEFAMALA, a school for Lay Ministry focusing on evangelism. As a result, the Diocese began to train evangelists for church planting. The school trained over 30 evangelists and 50 *mpiandry* (shepherds). Most of the emphasis was on training people on how to evangelize. A significant problem occurred when the evangelist started a church. The evangelist then immediately came under the local parish priest. Results depended on how receptive the local priest was towards evangelism. Either the evangelist became the local glorified errand boy of the priest, or he was able to get on with his work as an evangelist. This problem reflects the

lack of training at St. Paul's Theological College as well as the lack of priority at the diocesan level. Most of those who were trained as evangelists have remained in the same church since being commissioned. SEFAMALA has also decreased in enrollment and presently has not had any new students since 2006. Even though this program focused on how to bring people to faith and teach them the basic elements of the faith, it provided no training on reproducing Christian leaders.

Local Parish Leadership is Divided and Has No Program for Reproducing Christian Leaders

Another shortfall is that the selection of local leadership is based on seniority, popularity, wealth, or by default. Due to the growth of democracy in Madagascar and its impact in the local church, the local parish committees are elected rather than appointed. The process tends to be unstructured. There are insufficient criteria to identify parish leaders with respect to calling, character, chemistry and competency. Furthermore, because of an insufficient structure and process for discernment, the Malagasy church has tremendous faith issues regarding discernment of God's will. The church asks Christians who are at different levels of their faith to vote democratically for people who have different levels of faith. As a consequence, people at different spiritual levels are voted onto the governing body (Parish Council) and determine the church's vision and mission. The members of a parish council are not equally committed to serving Christ; there may be members who are searching in their faith serving with others who do not believe as well as others who have become strong in their faith and their commitment. How can

such a diverse group serve the interest of God in a democratic forum that focuses on serving the interests of the people? There should instead be an approach to reproducing Christian leaders who can serve the local parish with God's interests at heart.

The Catechism Lacks Teaching in Reproducing Lay Leaders

The catechism currently used in Madagascar dates back to 1662, the time of King Charles II. It is used to prepare candidates for confirmation and reconfirmation of the baptism vows. It is also used to prepare confirmands to receive their first Holy Communion. In Madagascar, candidates are prepared for six to twelve months before being confirmed. Their preparation focuses on The Articles of Faith stated in the Apostles Creed, which focuses primarily on the Trinity; the Ten Commandments; the Lord's Prayer; and the two major sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. For many Malagasy, preparation for confirmation is both the first and the last step towards Malagasy Anglican adult education. Many Anglicans believe that once they have been confirmed there is no need for any further theological education unless they plan on becoming a priest, deacon, evangelist, *mpiandry*, or catechist.

There is no doubt that the catechism served a basic purpose for many years in the Anglican tradition. However, it is significantly lacking in content concerning personal holiness, daily devotions, giving, obedience, fasting, evangelism, discipleship groups, studying Scripture, and reproducing Christian leaders.

The Local Priest is Not Always Interested in Evangelism, Discipleship or Reproducing Christian Leaders

In the mid 1990's through 2002, the nature of the bishop's follow up and support preceding an evangelistic mission led by a newly commissioned Malagasy evangelist was an important issue. The author soon realized that local Anglican priests did not always have an evangelist's passion for evangelism; often there was conflict between the priest and the evangelists. Some priests viewed evangelists as subservient to their own ministry and believed the evangelist was there to serve the interest of the local priest. The local priest was always interested in the numerical growth of his church, but usually sought to achieve such growth through the traditional way of doing church.

The issue of nurturing new Christians became apparent to the author after he completed evangelistic missions or started a new church plant. Many Malagasy came to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The converts' faith grew very quickly over the first six months or a year. After this period, however, church numbers would begin to dwindle. It was clear that many people came to faith, but that continued Christian development after their conversion was lacking. The author began to place an evangelist in the village. Although the assignment of an evangelist who had been trained in follow-up from a western perspective to a village seemed to help a little, there continued to be a void in follow-up and in reproducing Christian leaders in an African Model.

African Traditional Religion (A.T.R.): A Possible African Model for Reproducing Christian Leaders

This topic is too vast and complicated to complete an adequate in-depth study; given the author's limitations only the surface of the topic will be explored. The author used a basic approach to this exploration. African Traditional Religion and its parts will simply be defined.

First, "African" refers to a certain geographic location in the world. Originally in the Greco-Roman world, African was used to describe the place and hot climate of the provinces in the northern part of what is presently called the continent of Africa. It was referred to as the sunny part of the world. Yet the term did not always have positive connotations. The early missionaries referred to Africa as the place where uncivilized and heathen people lived. In more modern times, Africa has been understood as the place where black people live.

Second, "traditional" refers to the myriad of cultures on the continent of Africa. Each of these cultures has its own customs, rituals, and beliefs. These customs, rituals and beliefs have been handed down orally from one generation to another and have been observed in a particular way. Some of these traditions are unchanging while others are always in flux. Some are found in other cultures; others are not.

Third, "religion" is very difficult to define because there are over 900 possible definitions reflecting the many countries and tribal views on the continent. Many of the

different Malagasy ethnic groups do not have a definition for religion.²⁴ However, in all African communities, religion is apparent and each community interacts daily on religious matters. It seems that religion is everywhere in the mind of an African. As John Mbiti has said, “Africans are notoriously religious.”²⁵

There are a few commonalities among A.T.R. that illustrate the hierarchy of forces and the African cycle of life.

1) One Supreme Being: This being is given various names, yet it remains as one Supreme Being. Among the Borana in northern Kenya the Supreme Being is called *Waaq*; among the Merina in Madagascar, *Andriamanitra*; in southern Madagascar: *Zanahary*.

2) Ancestors: This is the highest stage of existence and one’s aspiration in life. John Mbiti called ancestors the living dead²⁶ who are still very much part of the living. Those who have lived the longest (elders) and have started the clans are the most likely candidates for this status in the community.

Generally, they are designation by the community as an ancestor (i.e. founders

²⁴ Michael T. Katola, “African Traditional Religion: Major Beliefs, Practices and Contemporary Forms” (lecture, Maryknoll Institute of African Studies, St. Mary’s University and Tangaza College, Nairobi, Kenya, January 15, 2004).

²⁵ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1969), 1.

²⁶ John S. Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion*, 2nd Ed. (Nairobi: East African Educational Publications, 1975), 118.

of the clan, the prophets, and grandparents). Elders are understood to be moral authorities who are invisible guardians for the communities.

- 3) The living beings: Humans. The African Life Cycle identifies humans' relationships with God, ancestors, other humans, and other living and non-living things. Age and rank are significant because responsibility increases with both. Living a long life is believed to be a blessing from those who are higher in the forces mentioned above, e.g., ancestors. Those who die at a young age are understood to be cursed.
- 4) Living things: animals and plants
- 5) Non-living things: stones, mountains, rivers, etc.

The beliefs above are central to African Traditional Religion, and they focus on issues of God, ancestors, spirits, human life, magic, and the afterlife. John Mbiti suggests that African Traditional Religion has five broad components: beliefs, practices, religious objects/places, values (morals), and religious leaders. These five components must work together for us to understand African Traditional Religion.²⁷

- Beliefs generally revolve around the following: belief in One God; belief in divinities; belief in spirits (some good and some evil) active in the lives of

²⁷ Mbiti, *Introduction to Africa Religion*, 11-13.

the community; belief in the ancestors as the highest level of blessing; and, the use of magic and witchcraft.

- Practices represent the activities and ceremonies of the African people. Practices are the ways in which Africans live out their beliefs and pass them from one generation to the next. Practices are expressed through praying, singing, dancing, making sacrifices, offerings, and oblations, and ritual.
- Religious objects and places are important to Africans. For example, it is not uncommon to find mountains, rivers, rocks, trees, etc. designated as holy or sacred. In addition, many African cultures have their own holy objects, such as sticks, poles, charms, masks, and so forth. These are used for special occasions.
- Values and morals are the part of the religion that deals with ideas that safeguard or uphold the life of the person(s) in their relationship with one another and the world around them. Values and morals cover topics such as truth, justice, love, right and wrong, good and evil, beauty, decency, respect for people and property, and community.
- Religious leaders are responsible for conducting spiritual services, ceremonies and rituals for individuals and communities. Religious leaders are sometimes known as the priest, rain-maker, ritual elder, diviner, or medicine man. They are the human keepers of the African Religious heritage.²⁸

²⁸ Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion*, 11-13.

A.T.R. is found everywhere and cannot be separated from religion and culture. It is very pragmatic. It is interested in solving today's problems. Life is important here and now, and the future is not emphasized.

What is the African Cycle of Life?

As mentioned above, one important element in A.T.R. is the African cycle of life. The African cycle of life became popularized during the Walt Disney's film production of the *Lion King*.²⁹ The film's producers did a fairly decent job in bringing out the idea of the African Cycle of Life. The producers integrated a song by Elton John called the "Circle of Life" into the film. In addition, some of the dialogue lends support to the concept of the African Cycle of Life:

The film begins with the birth rite of the newborn prince, *Simba* (meaning lion in Kiswahili). The animals from nearby flock to Pride Rock to watch Rafiki (meaning 'friend' in Kiswahili), the baboon, open an egg-like gourd and dip his finger into the dark liquid, anointing the baby lion on the forehead.

As a young cub, Simba's father, along with Zazu the hornbill, teaches him pride lore, the cycle of life and his responsibilities as a future leader. He is also taught about boundaries and consequences. Simba flees for his life from his crazy uncle. While in

²⁹ Roger Allers and Rob Minkoff, *The Lion King*, DVD. Directed by Roger Allers and Rob Minkoff (Walt Disney Company, 1994).

exile, he becomes friends of a few other animals (elders) who, in turn, begin the initiation rite by teaching him the ways and customs of his people. A new philosophy: *Hakuna Matata* (in Kiswahili “no worries”) is taught to the young lion. He is to take life one day at a time. Narla, his childhood lion cub friend, is re-united with him and urges him to take up his responsibility, just as his father taught him and would have wished. The local elders are a warthog (Pumba) and a meerkat (Timon) who have the task of leading and developing Simba into the next heir of Pride Nation. Simba has a choice (initiation): to stay and enjoy a carefree life or to become a responsible leader and adult lion by putting his pride (of lions) first. Towards the end of the film, Simba goes through the rite of eldership. He is recognized as a leader of Pride Nation and is given his rightful place as king.

The death rite is seen most clearly at one point when Rafiki and Simba interact.

“I know your father,” says Rafiki.

“My father is dead,” responds Simba.

“Nope, he’s alive. I’ll show him to you.”

This is when Rafiki leads Simba to a pool,

“Look down there.”

First, Simba sees his own reflection, then the face of his father.

“You see he lives in you,” says Rafiki.³⁰

³⁰Allers and Minkoff, *The Lion King*.

Simba hears a familiar voice call his name and looks up to see his father's spirit among the stars. The spirit says to him, "Look inside yourself. You must take your place in the Circle of Life. Remember who you are." Simba believes and sees that the dead are part of the living as well. The Circle of Life continues and is reproduced through the children and grandchildren.

In this film four rites of passage are mentioned: birth, initiation, eldership and death. Each rite marks the progressive movement from one stage of life to the next, signifying maturity and responsibility in the community. These African rites of passage are opportunities for celebrating life.

Africans love to celebrate life and generally think of life as an ongoing and endless life cycle. A person goes through many different phases (rites of passage) while here on earth and afterwards. These phases allow the cycle of life to continue from one generation to the next, reproducing African leaders.

Summary of the Problem, the Hypothesis, and the Proposed Methodology for Developing a Solution to the Problem

The problem is the insufficient number of mature Malagasy Christian leaders as well as the lack of successful avenues for reproducing faithful leaders in the Eklesia Episkopaly Malagasy. This problem is observable at all levels – in local churches, parishes, deaneries and dioceses.

The author's hypothesis is that the key concepts of the African life-cycle and the rites of passage can be translated and adapted within a Christian context into a culturally relevant, scripturally grounded, and therefore, long-lasting, African Model to build future African church leaders. By completing the steps in the methodology described below, the author will demonstrate the value and relevance of developing an African model for reproducing Malagasy Christian leaders in the context of evangelism, discipleship and leadership development. Thus the author believes this problem of insufficient numbers of faithful leaders and the lack of avenues to reproduce them can then be addressed and resolved by implementing a culturally and scripturally grounded African Model for reproducing Christian leaders. Through the systematic implementation of this model, sufficient numbers of potential Malagasy Christian leaders will be equipped through modeling and mentoring by current Christian leaders.

The methodology to be used by the author in developing this model includes first, the examination of scripture to see if there is any evidence to support evangelism, discipleship and leadership development. The author will then observe connections between the key concepts in the African rites of passage and the Christian rites of passage and the scriptural support of evangelism, discipleship and leadership development. Following this, the proposed African Model for reproducing Malagasy Christian leaders will be tested through interviews with representatives from three different Malagasy ethnic groups, each of whom is a priest of the African Traditional Religion.

In addition, testing will be conducted with leaders (clergy, evangelists and lay), and potential leaders (students training to become evangelist or clergy) from the Eklesia Episkopaly Malagasy in southern Madagascar.

In the following chapter, the author examines the biblical basis for reproducing African Christian leaders that is deeply rooted in evangelism, discipleship and leadership development. If a biblical basis for leadership reproduction can be found, the African Proverb may be transformed into a positive statement expressing that Christians are a mile long and a mile deep.

CHAPTER II BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

The author believes that the process of intentionally reproducing Christian leaders is deeply rooted in evangelism, discipleship and leadership development and is imperative and important for the success of the Eklesia Episkopaly Malagasy. If the E.E.M. wants to move forward to address and resolve some of the issues alluded to earlier, such as a lack of intentionally reproducing and making disciples in the areas of evangelism and discipleship, then it will need to have a solid foundation. One place to establish a solid and cohesive foundation is the Bible. Do the Holy Scriptures provide a basis for the author's claim? Are there any biblical foundations for such an argument? If so, how strong are the claims?

Revival is the Prerequisite for Reproducing African Christian Leaders

Revival is the prerequisite for reproducing African Christian leaders. Revival has become a common term used in Africa. Sometimes it refers to political parties or persons in leadership needing to be revived as it was when they first took power. It is also used among the churches such as the East African Revival, which began in the 1930's-1940's as an evangelistic tool in to bring people to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ in places like Kenya and Uganda. At other times it refers to a renewal of Christians within the church body which includes lots of singing, dancing and sometimes loud emotional preaching.

Definition of Revival: To Live Again

The word revival is derived from two Latin words, *re* which means “again” and *vivo* which means “to live.” The literal meaning is “to live again.”¹ Although the word revival is not found in the English Bible, the word revive is. The Hebrew translation for revive (*hayah*; חָיָה) is used over 250 times in the Old Testament with the primary root “to live.” It is expressed in many different ways such as to “live,” “revive,” “restore,” “preserve,” “heal,” etc.

“Revival is always the return of something to its true nature and purpose.”² The Old Testament supports this definition. *Hayah* conveys the idea of breathing³ which is demonstrated in the beginning of creation as the Spirit (breath) of God was hovering over creation (Genesis 1:2) and as God breathed into Adam’s nostrils the breath of life (Genesis 2:7). In both cases, when God breathed there was life. The illustration of breath and life can also be seen in the book of Ezekiel when God breathes life into those dry bones. “I will make breath enter you and you will come to life” (Ezekiel 37:5-6).⁴ It

¹ Erwin W. Lutzer, *Flames of Freedom* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1976), 135-36.

² Robert E. Coleman, *The Coming World Revival* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1995), 20.

³ Coleman, *The Coming World Revival*, 19.

⁴ New International Version (NIV) referenced, unless otherwise indicated.

is clear that God initiates and is at the center of revival.⁵ Man's being should not be separated from his nature and purpose, or calling, designed right from the beginning with Adam who is the first among all human beings (both Christians and non-Christians). True life can only be lived by fulfilling our calling in life. Paul said in Ephesians 4:1, "I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received from God."

The New Testament Greek equivalent of the Old Testament Hebrew *Hayah* is *anazao* (ἀναζάω). The word comes from two words *zao* meaning "to live" and *ana* meaning "again." Literally it means to "live again." The best illustration is from Romans 14:9 which says, "For this reason, Christ died and returned to life (to live again) so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living." The word is only used a few times in the New Testament (Romans 7:9, 14:9 and Revelation 20:5), so it is difficult to draw too much from it. One possible reason it was not mentioned more frequently in the New Testament was because it was over a shorter time span than the Old Testament. The New Church under Christ did not have enough time to develop and mature. It has been suggested that the time was too short for people to mature and then fall away, needing to be revived again. However, the Apostle John in the book of Revelation, tells of a few of the churches needing revival, such as Pergamum, which needed to repent (Revelation 2:16), Sardis which needed to be made alive (Revelation 3:1) and Laodicea

⁵ See further examples: Genesis 17:18, 20:7, 42:18; Exodus 19:13; Deuteronomy 4:1, 5:33; Judges 15:19; 1 Kings 17:22; 2 Kings 8:1,5; Ezra 9:8; Psalms 86:5, 138:7; Isaiah 57:15; Hosea 6:2; Habakkuk 3:2.

which was lukewarm spiritually (Revelation 3:15). All are examples of communities needing revival.

Indicators for Revival

There are certain indicators that are evident when revival is taking place in a community. Walter Kaiser argues that 2 Chronicles 7:14 “If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land” is at the heart of all revivals in any community. He explains from this passage that there are four biblical conditions of revival: People are to humble themselves; seek God’s face; repent; and pray.⁶

People are to seek the Lord. For any true revival to take place, people in the community are to seek the Lord and put this as their top priority with their whole heart, mind and soul. This is reminiscent of the psalmist who seeks the Lord even in times of difficulty, “though I walk in the midst of trouble you revive my life, you stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes with your right hand you save me,” (Judges 15:19, cf. 1 Kings 17:22, 2 Kings 13:21, Psalms 138:7). Finney describes what happens in general terms regarding conversions. “Persons are first awakened with a sense of their miserable

⁶ Walter Kaiser, *Revive Us Again: Biblical Principles for Revival Today* (Scotland: Christian Focus, 2001), 5-6, 233-239.

condition by nature, the danger they are in of perishing eternally and that it is of great importance to them that they speedily escape and get into a better state.”⁷

People are to repent and turn away from their evil ways. When one turns away from his/her self-centeredness and turns toward God, one is set free to live. Hosea says it like this, “Come let us return to the Lord . . . After two days he will revive us, on the third day he will restore (revive) us that we may live in his presence” (Hosea 6:1-2). Jesus reiterates this in the context of world evangelism. “Repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47). Peter challenges the early church in Acts 2:38, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Finney suggests one must begin by “looking at your hearts, examine thoroughly and see where you are; whether you are walking with God every day, or walking with the devil; whether you are serving God or serving the devil most.”⁸

People are to pray to the Lord regularly. One of the New Testament revivals⁹ took place within the Antioch community. After coming to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the church wanted to seek the face of God through worshiping him. Two ways they ascribe

⁷ Charles Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* (Westwood, N.J. Revell, n.d.), 23.

⁸ Finney, 33.

⁹ There are recorded at least three others community revivals/awakenings in Acts (Jews in Acts 2, Samaritans in Acts 8, Gentiles in Acts 10).

worth to the Lord are in fasting and prayer (Acts 13:1-4). We are reminded in Deuteronomy 4:7 of the Old Testament that God is near us when we pray. “What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to Him?” Finney suggests that “prayer is the essential link in the chain of causes that lead to revival.”¹⁰

English preacher Sidlow Baxter said when he was eighty-five years of age: “I have pastored only three churches in my more than sixty years of ministry. We had revival in every one, and not one of them came as a result of my preaching. They came as a result of the membership entering into a covenant to pray until revival comes. And it did come, every time.”¹¹

People are to humble themselves before God. God desires one who is humble and not conceited. God wants us to give up all for him. “This is the one I esteem, he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word” (Isaiah 66:2). The Lord also says, “Remove the obstacles out of the way of my people ... I live in a high and holy place but also with him who is contrite and lowly (humble) in spirit and to revive the heart of the contrite” (Isaiah 57:14-15). God wants his people to humble themselves and he will give life to them.

¹⁰ Finney, 45.

¹¹ Bob J. Wilhite, *Why Pray?* (Altamonte Springs, FL: Creation House, 1988), 111.

Kaiser has argued correctly from 2 Chronicles 7:14, but there seem to be a few additional conditions which are evident in the New Testament which are not necessary in the Old Testament. People are to see and experience an increase of the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. When a revival began in the New Testament, the Holy Spirit was at the center of it. Pentecost, the first revival after Jesus' ascension, was the result of the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. There were numerous supernatural activities guided by the Holy Spirit during Pentecost. First, those in the upper room spoke in foreign languages (Acts 2:6). Second, Peter preached boldly (Acts 2:14-39). Thousands repented and 3,000 came to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 2:41). We are told the community began to devote themselves to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, prayer and breaking of the bread (Acts 2:42) and that many miracles and signs accompanied the apostles (Acts 2:43). Finney said that when they had a revival "there was a remarkable pouring out of the Spirit of God, which thus extended from one end to the other of this country."¹²

People are to see an increase in evangelism. John the Baptist is the first one in the New Testament to be a witness of Jesus Christ to the world. John's primary purpose was to make ready a people prepared for the Lord (Luke 1:17b) and witness to Jesus (John 1:8). John prophesied about Jesus and encouraged his listeners to repent and be

¹² Finney, 17.

baptized. Whenever there was a revival in the New Testament, there was an increase in witness. At Pentecost 3,000 people came to faith. The apostles were to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Holy Spirit. Once they did, they would be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Edwards says that when revival hit his area there was an increase in conversions. “The work of conversion was carried on in a most astonishing manner and increased more and more; souls did, as it were, come by flocks to Jesus Christ.”¹³

Human beings were created to live and live life to their fullest by glorifying God. There are indicators of renewal that seem to be strong signs of revival taking place. When the individual and community have increased in: seeking the will of God, repentance, intensified prayer, a rise in humility, multiplied supernatural signs and wonders, and a growing urgency to share Christ, then people begin to see and demonstrate the fruits of revival.

It is in light of this context that revival is at the heart of everything Christians do, and this includes reproducing African Christian leaders. Developing a program or strategy for reproducing African Christian leaders is not possible unless we know why we were created to live and move and have our being. In this context, we now examine

¹³ Jonathan Edwards, *Jonathan Edwards on Revival* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1999), 13.

whether reproducing African Christian leaders through evangelism and discipleship is scripturally based. The author believes it is biblically sound.

Biblical Evidence for Reproducing Leaders

In the opening verse of the Bible, one begins to see indirect references to reproducing. As God creates the earth, He also creates a system in which it is able to reproduce itself. He creates the sun, the water, the vegetation, the soil, the plants, the animals and finally humankind. His purpose in creation is to bring glory to himself. Some parts of his creation were designed for reproducing.

He chose man to rule over and administer the system he had put into place (Genesis 2:15). He instructed man and woman to be fruitful and multiply. In God's initial words with his newly created beings, he stated clearly his intentions for them. They are to reproduce Himself in them (His likeness not His divinity) with the intention that they would reproduce others. The Bible states, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it'" (Genesis 1:27-28). His first words set the stage for mankind to be fruitful and multiply thereby fulfilling God's first blessing and commandment for man. His blessing is repeated throughout Genesis with Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Jacob, Joseph, and in Exodus with the Israelites (Genesis 1:22, 9:1,7, 17:20, 28:3, 35:11, 47:27, 48:4; Exodus 1:7; Leviticus 26:9). It is interesting that it is not repeated again until the times of

Jeremiah and Ezekiel when God says that he will bless the remnant (Jeremiah 23:3; Ezekiel 36:11).

Biblical Evidence for Reproducing Godly Leaders

Even though the Old Testament tends to be silent after the Pentateuch regarding being fruitful and multiplying, it does speak to the importance of reproducing spiritual children and grandchildren. The Old Testament mentions on numerous occasions the importance of the parents passing on to their children and children's children the stories and practices passed on from God. For example, God speaking to Moses regarding the ten plagues and the Passover:

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his officials so that I may perform these miraculous signs of mine among them, that you may tell your children and grandchildren how I dealt harshly with the Egyptians and how I performed my signs among them, and that you may know that I am the LORD" (Exodus 10:1-2; 13:8).

The Israelites had a responsibility to pass on their legacy from one generation to another. It was never enough for them to learn; they must also reproduce what they had learned in thought, word and deed in the lives of their children and children's children. God's legacy was passed on from one generation to the next:

These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to

possess, so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life....Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.....Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up (Deuteronomy 6:1-8).

Jesus Reproduces Leaders

There is substantial material that supports the idea of reproducing Christian leaders during New Testament times. The main difference in the New Testament is that reproducing leaders revolves around the person and work of Jesus Christ. Robert Coleman has written and demonstrated this in his best-selling book, *The Master's Plan of Evangelism*. Jesus reproduced followers who eventually became leaders once Jesus ascended. The Master's plan for evangelism focused on what Jesus did in bringing people closer to God. As Coleman said, "Jesus used nine principles: incarnation, selecting, associating, consecrating, imparting, demonstrating, delegating, supervising and reproducing."¹⁴

Jesus was incarnational because of his servant attitude (Philippians 2:7-8) and his identification with us. He wept (Luke 19:14); he had compassion (Matthew 15:32); he was hungry (Matthew 4:2); he ate (Matthew 9:10); and he prayed (Matthew 26:39). These are all human traits which emphasize his incarnation.

¹⁴ Robert Coleman, *The Master's Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Flemin H. Revell, 2002), 25.

Jesus also selected his disciples. He was looking for people such as Andrew (John 1:37-38), Phillip (John 1:41), Levi (Mark 2:14), and Peter (Matthew 4:19) who would be faithful and teachable leaders. Jesus associated with his disciples. He did not leave them on their own but instead spent time with them during his daily routine. He took time to pray with them (Luke 11:1) and to teach them (Matthew 5:1-2). Furthermore, Jesus consecrated his disciples. He expected that they would desire to be obedient (Matthew 28:20). Jesus demonstrated how people were to minister. He was the model which his disciples were to follow. He did not ask anything that he could and did not do himself first. He taught his disciples how to pray (Matthew 6) and how to evangelize (Luke 9:1; 10:1, 8-9). Then Jesus delegated to the disciples what he had taught them. He gave them responsibility in the ministry. He sent the 12 disciples out into the villages to preach, teach and heal (Matthew 10). In the feeding of the 5,000 each disciple had a responsibility passing out the loaves and fishes (Luke 9:10-17). However, Jesus didn't send them out alone without a follow-up plan. He supervised them.

It was common when Jesus had finished speaking to the crowd to then gather with the disciples to ask if they understood his teachings. One example is the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:1-14). Jesus wanted to make sure they understood his teachings. He also used these opportunities to teach his disciples accountability. Jesus expected his disciples to reproduce Christian leaders and to be fruitful (John 15:5-6). This principle is actually the main objective of Jesus. If it is not the aim of reproducing Christian leaders, then one has missed the point of Jesus. Jesus exemplified and reproduced what he had

learned from the Father. Jesus said “As you have sent me so I send them into the world” (John 17:18).

The final principle is impartation. Jesus imparted the Holy Spirit to his disciples (John 20:15) and expected his disciples would be guided by the Holy Spirit (John 14:16; 16:13). Thus, all people will have to put their trust in the Holy Spirit.

These are the nine principles that Jesus used to promote evangelism. One of his significant claims was to reproduce life-long disciples and leaders for the kingdom of God.

Paul Reproduces Christian Leaders

The apostle Paul speaks clearly on reproducing followers and leaders of Christ. When writing to Timothy, one of his spiritual children in whom he had poured his life, he says in 2 Timothy 2:2, “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others,” *kai a ekousas par' emou dia pollon marturon, tauta parathou pistois anthropois, hoitines hikanoi esontai kai heterous didaxai.*

Paul is not saying anything new nor is he saying anything private. He makes it very clear that what he is saying is truthful, reliable and trustworthy. He has been very transparent in his public affirmation of what he has said. Truth can never be hidden, but rather made public.

The Greek word *parathou* (second person aorist middle imperative singular) is the only place where this is found in the Bible. It is derived from verb *paratithemi* which is used nineteen times in the New Testament.¹⁵ It comes from the two Greek words *para* meaning beside and *tithemi* meaning place. Literally it means to place beside or to set alongside. It conveys the idea to put in trust or to deposit with someone. It illustrates the picture of taking a precious treasure and depositing it into a safety deposit box. Paul is entrusting or depositing that which has tremendous value (the Gospel) and sensitive information that cannot be compromised in the hands of his spiritual son, Timothy. Paul indicates that one of the things that he deposits is sound teaching (1 Timothy 1:12) of the Gospel with the help of the Holy Spirit (1 Timothy 1:13-14).

Paul does not entrust this information to just anyone, as if it is given away freely, but to faithful men, *pistoi anthropois*. Paul saw Timothy as a reliable and trustworthy man. Timothy was not just someone off the street or a young Christian who had just come to faith. He was a devoted follower of Jesus Christ who had proven himself over time as a faithful, reliable, dependable and trustworthy man of God. John Wesley said it this way: "If I had 300 men who feared nothing but God, hated nothing

¹⁵ www.preceptaustin.org/2_timothy_21-7.htm (accessed May 10, 2010).

but sin, and were determined to know nothing among men except Jesus Christ and Him crucified; I would set the world on fire."¹⁶

Timothy was Paul's spiritual son who had lived with Paul through times of rejoicing and times of suffering for the sake of the Gospel. Through thick or thin he had proven his loyalty to the Gospel and to Paul. Just as Paul poured his life into Timothy, Timothy was to pour his life into his spiritual son(s). Timothy not only received what Paul had given and poured into his life, but he intentionally looked for spiritual sons to whom he in turn poured his own life. Timothy took what Paul had deposited into his life and transferred it into the lives of others. The assumption is that Timothy (the spiritual son) was teachable and could teach others. Once Timothy had started this process and began investing into his spiritual sons - who were in essence Paul's spiritual grandsons, he had begun the process of reproducing Christian leaders, a process that has its roots with Genesis 1:28 and Matthew 28:18-20 and focuses on 2 Timothy 2:2.¹⁷ A person who has spiritual grandsons and granddaughters is one who has successfully reproduced people who will then again reproduce Christian leaders.

Billy Graham said one of the first passages he memorized was on reproducing Christian leaders:

¹⁶ Dwight Edwards, "Call to Completion" <http://bible.org/article/2-timothy-call-completion> (accessed May 5, 2010).

¹⁷ Edwards, <http://bible.org/article/2-timothy-call-completion> article (accessed May 5, 2010).

One of the first verses of Scripture that Dawson Trotman, founder of the Navigators, encouraged me to memorize was “The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2, KJV). This is like a mathematical formula for spreading the Gospel and enlarging the church. Paul taught Timothy; Timothy shared what he knew with faithful men; these faithful men would then teach others also. And so the process goes on and on. If every believer followed this pattern, the church could reach the entire world in one generation! Mass crusades, in which I believe and to which I have committed my life will never finish the Great Commission; but a one-to-one ministry will.¹⁸

The founder of Navigators, Dawson Trotman said it this way:

A person is born again when he receives Jesus Christ. “But as many as received Him, to them He gave power to become the sons of God. Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12,13) - the new birth. It is God’s plan that these new babes in Christ grow. All provision is made for their growth into maturity, and then they are to multiply - not only the rich or the educated, but all alike. Every person who is born into God’s family is to multiply.¹⁹

One way of explaining this is through the multiplication factor. If you were to witness for six months and reach one person, and then disciple him/her for the next six months, at the end of the first year there would be two disciples. Then if both disciples reached one person each and discipled them, at the end of year two there would be four growing, reproducing Christians. If the four disciples each prayerfully continued this

¹⁸ Billy Graham, *The Holy Spirit* (Waco: Word Publishing, 1978), 147.

¹⁹ Dawson Trotman, *Born to Reproduce: A Passionate Call to Maturity, Spiritual Reproduction and Spiritual Parenting to Help Fulfill the Great Commission* <http://www.discipleshiplibrary.com/pdfs/1A.pdf> (accessed October 31, 2010).

lifestyle of witness and follow-up, they could impact the world for Christ in one brief lifetime. In 33 years one could win the world over to Christ.²⁰

One modern day example of the power of the principle of multiplication and linking this chain begins (as far as we have record) with a Sunday school teacher named Mr. Kimball, who in 1858 was burdened to lead a Boston shoe clerk named D.L. Moody to new life in Christ. Dwight L. Moody became a faithful evangelist. While Moody was in England in 1879, God used his message of sound doctrine to awaken an evangelistic zeal in the heart of F. B. Meyer, pastor of a small church, who later visited America. While preaching on a college campus, he was used by the Spirit to bring a student named J. Wilbur Chapman to saving knowledge of Christ. Chapman, engaged in YMCA work, employed a former baseball player, Billy Sunday, to do evangelistic work and while leading a revival in Charlotte, NC, so stirred the hearts of a group of local (faithful) men that they prayed and planned another evangelistic campaign, which came to fruition when God brought Mordecai Hamm to preach. During this revival, a young man named Billy Graham heard the Gospel and yielded his life to Christ. Only eternity will reveal the tremendous impact of that one trustworthy Sunday school teacher who invested his life in the lives of others. All he did was speak to a shoe salesman!²¹

²⁰ Billie Hanks, Jr., *Operation Multiplication* <http://www.ieaom.org/whatisom.html> (accessed May 5 2010).

²¹ www.sumnerwemp.com/witnessing/a_nobody_named_Kimball.htm(accessed May 5, 2010).

The Scriptures support the idea of reproducing Christian leaders beginning with the book of Genesis 1:28 with the first command to Adam and Eve “to go and be fruitful and multiply.” The New Testament picks up on this idea through the life and actions of Jesus Christ, as Dr. Coleman has suggested in the *Master’s Plan of Evangelism*.²² Jesus is intentional about producing leaders that in turn reproduce other leaders who reproduce others. Paul makes it clear in 2 Timothy 2:2 as he writes Timothy, his spiritual son, about his responsibility in reproducing other spiritual sons who are faithful and able.

Given the fact that the Bible supports reproduction and multiplication of spiritual leaders, what are the relationships between reproducing Christian leaders and evangelism and discipleship?

The Meaning of Making Disciples

To have a better understanding of discipleship one needs to look at what has been known as the Great Commission, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20). This particular passage has played a significant role over the years in local and global missions. Jesus is speaking to

²² Robert Coleman, *The Master’s Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI. Fleming H. Revell, 2002), 25.

his disciples just prior to his ascension. He makes his expectations clear for his followers. Yet in English, it is not as clear regarding his intentions as it is in the original Greek. In the Greek, *mathēteusate* means literally “you make disciples.” It is in the second person plural aorist active imperative which implies that all of his disciples whom he is addressing are to make disciples. Since “make” is the only verb in the aorist imperative tense here, this implies that it takes priority over the other verbs (going, teaching and baptizing). The other verbs are secondary and can best be understood in supporting the task of making disciples.

Peter Wagner suggests,

Notice that the verbs *used in the Great Commission* in Matthew 28:19-20 contains four action verbs: go, make disciples, baptize, and teach. In the original Greek, three of them, go, baptize and teach are participles or helping verbs. Only one, making disciples, is an imperative verb. It is clear exegetically that the goal of the Great Commission is to make disciples. Going, in itself, will not fulfill the great commission. Neither will baptizing or teaching. But at the same time, speaking practically now, no one can make disciples without going, baptizing or teaching. While these three activities cannot be understood as ultimate goals, they nevertheless do carry a sense of the imperative because they are necessary for the task.²³

Therefore, when Jesus was speaking to his disciples, they knew that the key for the expansion of the kingdom of God was for them to make disciples, just as Jesus had taught them how to be disciples. Jesus had invested over three years in the disciples’ lives, teaching them how to be disciples (Matthew 13:21). Now Jesus was commissioning

²³ C. Peter Wagner, *Church Growth and the Whole Gospel: A Biblical Mandate* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row Publishers, 1981), 54.

them as disciple makers. As D.A. Carson has rightly stated, “to make others what they themselves are - disciples of Christ.”²⁴ They are now to reproduce disciple makers. That does not mean they stop existing as disciples or learners of Christ, but they are being promoted and given more responsibility since Christ will be with the Father.

Evangelism is Central to Making Disciples

Jesus gives his disciples a three-fold plan on how to make disciples (discipleship) of Christ. The first part of the plan focuses on evangelism.

Evangelism is derived from *euaggelion*, the “good news,” which is used seventy-six times, primarily in the New Testament, to express the Christian message.²⁵ It implies that the Good News is connected directly to the Godhead such as the kingdom (Matthew 4:23; Luke 16:16), in reference to the beginning....of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Mark 1:1; Romans 1:9, 2:16, 15:19; 2 Thessalonians 1:8) and to God the Father (Mark 1:4; 1 Timothy 1:11). The implications are that the Godhead and good news cannot be separated. They are innate and intertwined with each other.

²⁴ D.A. Carson, *Matthew, the Expositor's Bible Commentary 8* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1984), 596.

²⁵ www.preceptaustin.org/philippians_13-5.htm (accessed May 5, 2010).

Evangelism Connects with Proclamation

Evangelism has a strong connection with preaching. It is used most often in Scripture to imply that a central role in evangelism is preaching (*Kerygma*). Jesus was the Good News, the incarnate God himself on earth. He preached the good news throughout his earthly ministry. For example in Matthew 4:17, “From that time Jesus began to preach and say, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”

It was also expected that his disciples would follow his example (Matthew 9:35; Mark 13:10; Luke 9:6). As Jesus sent out his disciples, they went out on their first mission and they preached the same message, “The kingdom of heaven is near” (Matthew 10:7). It was expected that they would continue to preach the same message long after Jesus ascended (Matthew 24:14, 26:13; Mark 14:9, 16:15; Luke 9:6 16:16; Acts 5:42, 8:4).

Peter reiterated to the brethren at their first synod meeting in Acts 15:7 that “God had called him to proclaim the good news.” But now they would be responsible for reproducing the second generation of followers of Christ. The second generation of Christians, people such as Paul and Barnabas, would then pass this good news on to people such as Timothy and Titus, who were the third generation (2 Timothy 2:2).

This brings us back to the Great Commission in Matthew. The Greek word used for going is *poreuthentes* which implies the meaning of “while one goes with the good

news.” It is understood that every disciple of Christ is going to go with the good news to reproduce and make disciples.

Evangelism to All Nations

The disciples’ mission was a centrifugal force to reach all peoples for Christ. God’s apostolic mission was propelling them outward, “Just as the Father has sent me so I now send you” (John 20:21). Jesus sends his disciples out just as he was sent from the Father.

The disciple was to reach all people for Christ. Jesus says in Matthew 28:19 that they are to go to all nations (*ethne*) to make disciples. There were no limitations nor exclusions, all nations from the tiniest to the largest, from the poorest to wealthiest, from the oldest to the newest, from the west to the east, from the north to the south, all are part of God’s strategic plan to be preached the good news. This is a true distinction that a disciple of Christ will go to all nations including Russia, Nepal, Madagascar, etc.

Ethne not only refers to all nations, but is more intentional in referring to each ethnic group in each nation, including the Borana in Northern Kenya and the Mahafaly in Southern Madagascar. No ethnic group is to be excluded nor left behind from receiving the proclamation of the good news. If one is going to follow Jesus, he or she is going to go out into the community, nation and the world to witness the good news by thought, word and deed (Acts 1:8). Evangelism is important to reproducing disciples because it

was given from the Godhead to the disciples of Christ for the purpose of proclaiming the good news to all people everywhere, in all times, for all eternity.

Discipleship is Pivotal to Reproducing Disciples

Evangelism is very important but is not sufficient for reproducing disciples. We ✱ must recognize that evangelism is the first step in reproducing disciples but not the last. The second step, which is just as important as the first step, is to disciple, or teach. Jesus says in Matthew 28:20, “teaching (*didaskontes*) them to obey everything that I command.” After evangelism (Roman way) or even before evangelism (Celtic way) making disciples must be an integral part of reproducing disciples.

It is clear that immediately after conversion the new disciple is to come under the authority of Jesus of Nazareth by accepting and confessing Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior and acknowledging his authority by beginning to obey the teachings of Christ.

Jesus does not directly define what one is to teach in Matthew 28. However, the author of the Gospel has made Jesus’ teaching expectations clear in the preceding didactic chapters. Certainly Jesus taught both orthodoxy and orthopraxis during his three years of disciple making process:

Discipleship Jesus style, according to Matthew, is much more than doctrine teaching and religious training. The last command of the Lord was not to teach and to baptize but “teaching them to obey everything that I command you.” Jesus’ disciples were trained not only orthodoxy - the

right doctrine - but also in orthopraxis - the right way of doing and living!²⁶

The author of Matthew spends a significant amount of time illustrating the importance of right doctrine and right living. For example, Jesus taught on the truth of the Kingdom in chapters 5-7 and then followed with actions in chapters 8-9. The author summarizes these sections by saying that Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness (Matthew 9:35).

The Gospel of Matthew teaches the good news of the Kingdom. As a matter of fact, Kingdom is mentioned 55 times in Matthew and is tied directly to the good news of the Kingdom in three places (4:23, 9:35, 24:14). Therefore, everything that Jesus commanded them to obey is connected with the good news of the Kingdom. For example, the anticipated preaching of John the Baptist (3:2), Jesus' proclamation to repent for the Kingdom of God, has come near (4:17), Jesus' Sermon on the Mount focused on character, lifestyle and spirituality of those followers who hope to enter the Kingdom of God (chapters 5-7). Furthermore, the Lord's Prayer focuses on your Kingdom come (6:10) and the chapter concludes with "strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33).

²⁶ Mortimer Arias and Alan Johnson, *The Great Commission: Biblical Models for Evangelism* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1992), 20.

There are numerous other examples of what Jesus taught his disciples, including the Golden Rule: "Do to others whatever you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12); the Greatest Commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength...You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37-39); love for our enemies: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you" (Matthew 5:43-48); the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one" (Matthew 6:6-13). Jesus also taught his disciples repentance and forgiveness: "If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he wrongs you seven times in one day and returns to you seven times saying, 'I am sorry,' you should forgive him" (Matthew 18:15-22).

However, all of these teachings can only be seen in light of the demonstration and meaning in Passion Week, the week in which Jesus suffered, died, was buried, and, on the third day, rose from grave. This is the week when Jesus, the incarnate God, proves Himself once and for all as the Messiah and Lord of all. He gave himself as an offering and sacrifice to God for us. The authors of the four Gospels devote a significant portion of their material to the events leading up to and including Passion Week. The amount of attention and space given to these events in the Scriptures signifies their importance as good news. Professor Stephen Taylor writes the following:

Remarkably, within that focus, the canonical Gospels give inordinate attention to the last week of Jesus' life, especially his crucifixion, burial and bodily resurrection. The Gospel of Mark, for example, devotes 40% of its presentation to this kind of material, what scholars called the 'Passion Narrative.' This fact is all the more striking given that Mark contains only a brief account of the resurrection. Similarly, the Gospel of John reserves nine of its 21 chapters for his version of the passion narrative. Matthew and Luke are similarly weighted toward the death and resurrection of Jesus, though they devote a significant percentage of their space to Jesus' teaching.²⁷

The early church understood discipleship in light of Jesus' death and resurrection. In his first sermon on Pentecost after Jesus' Ascension, Peter proclaimed that God raised Jesus from the dead (Acts 2:31-32) and made him Lord and Messiah (Acts 2:36). Peter continued: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." (Acts 2:38-39). The teaching of the cross and resurrection have always been at the heart of discipleship. If there had been no crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus would have been considered a nice guy with good moral teachings. C.S. Lewis argues,

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: "I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God." That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things

²⁷ Stephen S. Taylor, "Canonical Gospels or Other Gospels: What's the Difference?" <http://www.thetruthaboutdavinci.com/canonical-gospels-or-other-gospels-whats-the-difference.html> (accessed May 5, 2010).

Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic -- on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg -- or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.²⁸

Discipleship is to be understood as being an on-going, life-long student of Christ. As a disciple of Christ, one never stops learning. Teaching them is in the present participle, “implying that Christian instruction is to be a continuous process, not subordinate to and preparing for baptism, but continuing after baptism with a view to enabling disciples to walk worthily of their vocation.”²⁹ There also seems to be a strong connection between teaching and baptizing (*baptizontes*):

The main verb is ‘Make disciples.’ Subordinate to this are: *a.* baptizing them, and *b.* teaching them. In such a construction it would be completely wrong to say that because the word baptizing precedes the word teaching, therefore people must be baptized before they are taught. It is rather natural that baptizing is mentioned first, for while a person is baptized once (ordinarily), he continues throughout his life to be taught. The concepts “baptizing” and “teaching” are simply two activities, in co-ordination with each other, but both subordinate to “make disciples.” In other words, by means of being baptized and being taught a person becomes a disciple...³⁰

²⁸ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (San Francisco, Harper Collins Publications, 2001), 40-41.

²⁹ W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., *The Expositor's Greek Testament Vol. 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), 340.

³⁰ William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House), 1000.

This baptismal formula “Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19) is used in most churches and seems to reflect the process of discipleship making. On the one hand, it represents evangelism. In the baptismal service of the Episcopal Church, it suggests that the service is to be done publicly with church members gathered. During the baptismal covenant, the people being baptized are asked six questions, three of which specifically focus on the heart of evangelism. “Will you [the candidate] persevere in resisting evil and whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord? Secondly, will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ? Thirdly, do you promise to follow and obey him as your Lord?”³¹

The Church of England’s baptismal service supports this evangelistic tone by asking six questions. However, the questions asked here are more direct and the candidates make it very clear that they come under the authority of Christ. The questions include: “Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God? Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil? Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbor? Do you turn to Christ as Savior? Do you submit to Christ as Lord? Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life?”³² Later in

³¹ Charles Mortimer Gilbert Custodian, *Book of Common Prayer* (New York, NY: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1979), 302-303.

³² The Church of England, <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/lifeevents/baptismconfirm/baptism1.html> (accessed on May 11, 2010).

the service, during the commissioning, the priest asks additional questions similar to the baptismal covenant in the Episcopal Church.

The remaining three questions from the Episcopal Church service focus on the disciple being taught by word and example: “Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers? Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself? Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?” These questions do support the idea and promotion of evangelism and discipleship in the church. However, one neglected area is the lifelong commitment of reproducing Christian leaders in the context of evangelism and discipleship. It is this idea on which this project is based.

In summary, there is strong evidence in Scripture for God’s children to live life to its fullest for the purpose of their creation. Part of this purpose is for Christians to reproduce disciples of Christ, not only spiritual children, but also spiritual grandchildren. Apostle Paul claims that this is the way forward for reproducing Christian leaders when he spoke to Timothy. Jesus gave the disciples and the early church a clear vision regarding reaching the world for Christ; this would be done by reproducing and making disciples for Christ. Jesus teaches this and demonstrates this by going (evangelism) and by teaching (discipleship in the context of baptism and obedience).

Having established the Biblical basis for reproducing Christian leaders in the context of evangelism and discipleship, in the following chapter the author

will examine the correlations between the Biblical Judeo-Christian rites of passage, including: naming/birthing, initiation, marriage, eldership and death and their congruent relationship with evangelism, discipleship and reproducing Christian leaders.

CHAPTER III JEWISH/CHRISTIAN RITES OF PASSAGE

Some Jewish/Christian rites of passage, such as naming, circumcision and baptism, have been in existence as long as Jews or Christians have been practicing their faith. Others such as confirmation, marriage and death/burial, have naturally grown as the church matured and saw the need for the community. Some rites of passage are what one can call “natural rites” and are found in every culture (such as naming, marriage and death/burial rites) while others, such as circumcision and baptism, were introduced specifically as Jewish or Christian religious ceremonies. It is the intent of the author to briefly describe the rites, their purpose, and their relationship to revival, evangelism and discipleship within the context of the scriptures and historical development. The author will also bring into the discussion various writers’ opinions on the rites.

Infant Rite: Naming/Circumcision Rite

The naming and circumcision rites provide the transition from being an infant with no rights or privileges to being a member of the Abrahamic Covenant with all of its privileges and benefits. The Bible indicates on several different occasions that the naming and circumcision rites occur in one context. The first mention of any of these is in the context of a covenant, a covenant made between God and Abraham. In Genesis 17:1-14,

the covenant combined two rites of passage, naming (renaming) and circumcision (*brit*-meaning covenant and *milah*-meaning to cut).

The covenant reiterates part of the blessing pronounced on Adam (Genesis 1:28) and later to Abram (Genesis 12:1-3), “I ... will greatly increase your numbers” (Genesis 17:2), “I will make you very fruitful” (Genesis 17:6), and “you will be a father of many nations” (Genesis 12:1-3). These passages reiterate the importance of evangelism, biological discipleship, and leadership development. The connections made to Adam, Abram and now to Abraham are significant because they tie together the components of the mission of God. God’s mission is to reach the world by reproducing Christian leaders: multiplying the faith, being fruitful, and targeting many nations. These words reflect the ideas reviewed earlier concerning revival, evangelism, and discipleship.

There are several parts of the covenant that were new. First, the naming rite of passage: Abram (exalted father) will be named (renamed) Abraham (father of many nations) (Genesis 17:5). There seems to be a play on words, the exalted father. “I will make your name great” (Genesis 12:1-3). I will become father of many nations. “I will make you into a great nation ... and all peoples will be blessed through you” (Genesis 12:3). Therefore, in reality Abraham holds to the dual blessing; he still remains the exalted father but also increases his responsibility to be the father of many nations.

The naming of Abraham also introduced the circumcision rite. This passage states that Abraham and all of his male descendants from one generation to another are to

participate in this rite. It was a sign for all future generations of the covenant made between God and Abraham. Even though this rite was at times neglected, such as Moses regarding his son (Exodus 4:24-26) and the second generation of exiles from Egypt (Joshua 5:2-8), the rite is central for every Jewish male (Leviticus 12:2).

Circumcision was to be an eternal covenant between God and Abraham and his descendants (Genesis 17:7). What started out as a male adult rite with Abraham and later continued with Joshua in Gilgal, becomes the norm for every male infant: the rite is performed on the eighth day after birth. Each male was responsible for his male heirs to be circumcised from one generation to the next. Even in times of persecution and prohibition by law, such as in parts of the former Soviet Union, the Jewish society still was able to gather together to perform and carry on this rite.

In the New Testament, the baby of Jesus is one good example connecting together the naming rite and circumcision rite on the same day. “On the eighth day (Luke 1:59), when it was time to circumcise him (see Leviticus 12:3), he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived” (Luke 2:21). Joseph and Mary as good Jewish parents are obedient in following the law and customs of the Jewish faith. Jesus is named on the eighth day. He seems to have been given two names: Jesus which means “God saves” and Immanuel which refers to “God with us” (Matthew 1:23). Both names imply his purpose here on earth: Jesus came as the incarnate God to save people and live among the people.

There are a few other examples of people following this rite: Abraham circumcised Isaac on the eighth day (Genesis 21:4); when the apostle Paul gave his testimony as a faithful Jew he said he was circumcised on the eighth day (Philippians 3:5). In modern times, both the naming rite and circumcision rite are still held on the same day, the eighth day, for all Jewish males.

In both the Old and New Testaments, the Bible demonstrates the importance of not only the physical part of the body being circumcised but also of the spiritual heart being circumcised. God wants all of the body, mind and spirit to be circumcised to Him so that they may live. This is clear in a passage in which God speaks to the Israelites: “The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live” (Deuteronomy 10:6). If not done, there are serious consequences as the book of Jeremiah says: “circumcise yourselves to the LORD, circumcise your hearts, you men of Judah and people of Jerusalem, or my wrath will break out and burn like fire because of the evil you have done, burn with no one to quench it” (Jeremiah 4:4). The Apostle Paul makes the spiritual connection by saying Jesus was the one who circumcised Christian hearts: “in him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ” (Colossians 2:11).

During the time of the first generation of Christians, the first Synod met to discuss the role of the circumcision rite of passage. Apparently by this time, the rite had evolved

to not only include and connect people back to the covenant made between God and Abraham, but to also include the rite as required for salvation. The early church, which included both Jews and Christians, had to decide whether this rite of passage was to be required for all as some had hoped. After much prayer the Synod decided to state clearly that salvation in Jesus Christ was by faith alone. It also stated that it was not right to either burden others (Gentiles) by making circumcision mandatory or be offensive to others (Jews) regarding practices of eating meat offered for sacrifice:

Birth is naturally the first major moment in a person's individual and communal life. When a boy is born, a circumcision rite called a *brit* ("covenant," short for *brit milah*, "covenant of circumcision") can be expected eight days later. This ceremony, of great antiquity, confirms the transition of the infant from being a child of Adam, as it were, to a member of the Jewish people. Thus the boy enters the "covenant of Abraham." The minor operation is delegated by the father to a ritually trained surgeon, called *mohel*. The *mohel* receives the child after he has been passed among the relatives, beginning with the mother (in a separate room; she is customarily secluded at this time). Just before the boy is given to the godfather (called *sandek*) to hold while the operation is performed according to the ancient procedure, the *mohel* temporarily places the child on a "chair of Elijah" symbolic of the hopes of redemption. After the actual circumcision, the child is handled to the father (or an honored guest) while the *mohel* recites blessings in praise of God and for the welfare of the child. It is then that the boy's name is announced. The name (e.g. David son of Abraham) will be how the boy will be "called up" when he is honored to bless the Torah in later years, and this name will be marked on his tombstone at death. From antiquity some Jews have had double names, a Hebrew name and a related vernacular name (e.g., in Hellenistic times one might be Jonathan or

Matthew and Theodore, names all meaning “gift of God”) or names that could function in both the ritual and secular communities.¹

Circumcision and naming rites of passage represent the transitions for Jewish male infants to become part of the covenant with God: from being not part of something to belonging, belonging to the Abrahamic covenant. The modern rite also says that the male child is to progress towards future rites of passage but must start with studying the Torah. After the end of the rite, those gathered say a three-fold blessing on the child, “as he entered the covenant, may he enter into the study of Torah, into marriage and into the doing of good deeds.”²

The rites of passage for naming and circumcision are closely linked. Even though they may have originally begun as an adult rite, it is clear that the rites soon after are performed with infants (excluding those Gentiles who come to faith as an adult). Another important point is that these rights are performed in the context of an eternal covenant between God and the Jewish people that has been passed from one generation to the next. Each generation is responsible to pass the teachings on (a form of discipleship and leadership development) and to circumcise Gentiles who come to the Jewish faith. Even Jesus participates in both rites; but once the Christian church began to expand and include

¹ Michael Fishbane, *Religious Traditions of the World*, ed. H. Byron Earhart (San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1993), <http://www.jewishgateway.com/library/rituals/> (accessed May 12, 2010).

² ReligionFacts, <http://www.religionfacts.com/judaism/cycle/circumcision.htm> (accessed May 13, 2010).

both Jews and Gentiles, the Jewish rites were given less importance as the Gentile converts increased in the Christian faith. The first synod in Jerusalem declared that the Jewish rite of circumcision was no longer necessary for Jewish Christians nor Gentile converts as part of the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants (Acts 15:5,11). Peter boldly proclaimed during this synod, “we (Jews) believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they (Gentiles) are” (Acts 5:11). For the Christian, the baptism rite took on a broader perspective and began to replace the circumcision rite.

Infant/Adult Rite: The Baptismal Rite

At the heart of the Baptismal rite is evangelism and discipleship. The baptismal rite depicts the transition from being a non-Christian to a member of the Christian body. One moves from living in darkness to living in light. On the one hand it demonstrates the allegiance to Christ as Lord and Savior and on the other repels the evils of Satan, the world and narcissism. It promotes a new covenant which Jesus established on the cross and through the resurrection. This baptismal covenant has a broader perspective than circumcision because it includes all ethnic groups, all genders, represented the washing away of sins and a new life in Christ. This newly baptized person is to align himself with the person and teachings of Jesus Christ. In the New Testament, the rite of baptism can be viewed as a maturation rite for those who are older. The word baptism comes from the

Greek word *baptizo* which is used seventy-seven times in the New Testament.³ It means to “dip”, “submerge”, and “immerse.”

Prior to Jesus’ ministry, John the Baptist used water as a visible sign of what God was doing inward, as a sign of washing away one’s sins. John the Baptist baptized people (Matthew 3:2, 6), including Jesus (Matthew 3:13, 16) in the Jordan River. In John 3:23 we are told that John the Baptist moved to Aenon because there was plenty of water for him to baptize others. We are told that Jesus’ own disciples were baptizing others (John 4:1-2). Even the second generation of Christians continued to baptize others. Phillip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:36). Paul says that he was glad that he didn’t baptize too many because he was concerned about how prideful some had become regarding whom had baptized them.

Water was one key element to be used in baptism. Baptism in water also signified a change in one’s behaviors and attitudes. John the Baptist says,

Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near ... People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River ... produce fruit in keeping with repentance. I baptize you with water for repentance. (Matthew 3:2)

³ www.preceptaustin.org/new_page_59.htm (accessed May 13, 2010).

Peter says on Pentecost:

Each one of you must turn from your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is to you and your children, and even to the Gentiles- all who have been called by the Lord our God (Acts 2:38-39).

The changing of behaviors and attitudes is demonstrated through repentance, which is a significant part of evangelism. Both John the Baptist and Peter challenge the thinking and prevailing behaviors of their listeners, who are potential candidates for repentance (*metanoeo*). The Greek word *metanoeo* is used thirty-four times in the New Testament⁴ and comes from two Greek words *meta* which means “after” and *noeo* which means “to understand.” It literally means to “understand after” implying that there is a change of mind and heart which demonstrates a new character. Therefore, this is the reason John the Baptist challenges them to bear fruit with their baptism.

It also seems to imply that one is to break from his or her past life styles of sin and cling to a new way of living towards God. The book of Galatians (5:19-20) gives us examples of a life full of sin: “sexual immorality, impure thoughts, eager for lustful pleasure, idolatry participation in Satanic activities, hostility, quarrelling, jealousy,

⁴ Church of the Great God, Inc., www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Lexicon.show/ID/G3340/metanoeo.htm (accessed May 13, 2010).

outburst of anger, selfish ambition, division.” When one is baptized, he is buried with Christ into death; all of our sins are buried with him. And just as he was raised, so his followers are to be raised with Christ in a new life. The book of Romans best illustrates the transition from old life to new life:

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life (Romans 6:3-4).

By this action, one agreed to bury his past behaviors and thoughts, which separated him from God and to take on a new life in Christ. There is a new alignment and new identification with Christ Jesus. But this is not possible unless one is baptized in the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is another key element to the baptismal covenant. John the Baptist said, “someone is coming soon who is far greater than I am, so much greater that I am not worthy to be his slave. I baptize you with water but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit” (Mark 1:7-8). In the Gospel of John, Jesus says to Nicodemus if you are not born again you can never see heaven (John 3:3). Then he goes on to explain to Nicodemus the importance of being “born of the water and the Spirit.” The baptism in water for repentance and forgiveness of sins was and is important for breaking away from the past sins, but the baptism in the Holy Spirit is imperative if one is going to live a new life. The Holy Spirit is the one who is to guide and comfort each person. The Holy Spirit will help

those baptized to produce fruit such as “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23).

Historically, Baptism and Confirmation were one rite. In the *Apostolic Tradition* written by Hippolytus for the community in 215 A.D. it is stated that after baptism, the bishop would then lay his hands on the newly baptized, pray for him, anoint him with oil in the name of the Trinity, and then mark the candidate with the sign of the cross. At the end the bishop would say “the Lord be with you” and the person would respond “and with your Spirit.”⁵ The anointing with oil was seen as the mark and seal of the Holy Spirit upon the newly baptized person.

James Montgomery Boice suggests baptism has a dual meaning, one which is temporal while the other is permanent:

The clearest example that shows the meaning of *baptizo* is a text from the Greek poet and physician Nicander, who lived about 200 B.C. It is a recipe for making pickles and is helpful because it uses both words. Nicander says that in order to make a pickle, the vegetable should first be 'dipped' (*bapto*) into boiling water and then 'baptized' (*baptizo*) in the vinegar solution. Both verbs concern the immersing of vegetables in a solution. But the first is temporary. The second, the act of baptizing the vegetable, produces a permanent change. When used in the New Testament, this word more often refers to our union and identification with

⁵ John Begley, *Christian Initiation: A Handbook of Liturgical and Patristic Sources* (Scranton, PA: Ridge Row Press, 1987), 19.

Christ than to our water baptism ... mere intellectual assent is not enough. There must be a union with Him, a real change, like the vegetable to the pickle!⁶

The Gospel uses two different formulas for baptism, one of which is a Trinitarian approach. It is mentioned in Matthew 28:19 “go and make disciples baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” The second approach is found in the book of Acts when Peter says people were baptized “in the Name of Jesus” (Acts 2:38). He changes this slightly when he baptizes his first gentile named Cornelius “in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 10:48). Some Pentecostal Holiness denominations follow this singular formula.

The *Didache*, one of the oldest Christian manuscripts written some time from 70-110 A.D., refers to a Trinitarian approach in three potential different types of water used for baptism:

After giving the foregoing instructions, ‘Baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit’ in running water. But, if you have no running water, baptize in any other; and, if you cannot in cold water, then in warm. But if the one is lacking, pour the other three times on the head ‘in the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit.’ But before baptizing, let the one who baptizes and the one to be baptized fast, and any others who are able to do so. And you shall require the person being baptized to fast for one or two days.⁷

⁶ http://www.preceptaustin.org/new_page_59.htm (accessed May 13, 2010).

⁷ Begley, 2-3.

The *Apostolic Tradition* suggests a different formula with three questions that intertwines the Apostles Creed with the Trinitarian formula.. At the end of each question, the candidate responds “I believe.” Then the candidate is baptized once after each question.⁸ Therefore during the first three centuries we have at least three different formulas.

In the Apology by Justin Martyr written around 150 A.D., Justin explains a fourth formula, by which people are to be baptized: “in the name of the Father and the Lord of all, and of our Savior, Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit”⁹ Neunheuser suggests that the issue regarding the formula isn’t all that important any longer because the point is that one is baptized in obedience to Christ’s command and his authority:

Baptism in the name of Jesus is baptism administered in obedience to Jesus’ command and with his authority, in the manner prescribed by him. The expression is, therefore, intended primarily to convey that it is a question of Jesus’ baptism, in contrast to that of John. This is quite clear from the linguistic usage of the time. However, from the solemn manner in which the names are mentioned in the baptismal commission which stands with such emphasis at the close of the Gospel, we must conclude that in addition to the meaning which in all probability is primary (that this baptism is to be administered on behalf of Christ and with his authority) something even more important is intended.¹⁰

⁸ Begley, 18.

⁹ Begley, 8.

¹⁰ Burkhard Neunheuser, *Baptism and Confirmation* Trans. John Jay Hughes (New York, NY: Herber and Herber, 1964), 14.

Historically, Hyppolytus goes into detail explaining the baptismal rite. Candidates are to prepare for three years for the baptismal rite on Easter. This was a serious discipleship program which was not to be taken lightly. However, if one was not able to finish this rite before he died by persecution, he was considered baptized in his own blood. Each candidate for baptism is to be examined regarding his character and moral behavior. The person to be baptized is to meet with the bishop before-hand so the bishop can exorcise any demons; immediately before baptism the candidate begins fasting and prayer. Once the day of baptism comes, the candidate is anointed with oil for thanksgiving and later anointed with oil for exorcism.¹¹

Since the reformation there has been a vigorous debate concerning who may be baptized, only adults or both infants and adults. All Christian denominations practice adult baptism, but not all baptize infants. The debate revolves around one's understanding of baptism. The independent churches claim that the Bible indicates that it was an adult rite called a believer's baptism. Basically one needed to be old enough to understand what he or she was doing: confessing their sins, turning away from evil and turning towards God through Jesus Christ. They ask Jesus Christ to be their Lord and Savior. On the other hand, the established churches have followed a historical line which indicates that it is clear from *Apostolic Traditions* that they were baptizing children from the

¹¹ Begley, 17.

beginning of the third century if not sooner. They also claim that baptism has replaced the Jewish circumcision for all infants.

The baptism rite has strong ties to evangelism in terms of repentance and turning away from evil. It also demonstrates that not only is one to turn away from evil, but towards Jesus Christ. Jesus makes a clear argument that this is part of discipleship when he challenges his disciples to go, teaching and baptizing. The ideas of going to proclaim Jesus, teaching the truths of Jesus and baptizing the new converts in the Name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit are all interconnected. Peter mentions at Pentecost, that baptism by water and the Holy Spirit is a gift for all generations to receive (Acts 2:38-39). As the church began to grow it was not possible for the bishop to be present at all baptisms. Therefore a second rite called confirmation was separated from baptism.

Confirmation: Adult Rite of Passage

Confirmation is an adult rite of passage that transitions the spiritual child to a spiritual adult. It transitions from one living on his own to another being empowered by the Holy Spirit. It transitions one from serving himself to serving God with the help of the Holy Spirit. There are three purposes for this rite: to reaffirm baptism vows taken at an earlier time (evangelism and discipleship); to impart the Holy Spirit; and, to commission an individual for service in the Kingdom of God (leadership development)

through the symbolic laying on of hands. The key to all three of these is the empowering of the Holy Spirit.

The confirmation rite has developed over a long time period. The roots of this rite are found in New Testament times. The Anglican Reformers found no biblical warrant that Christ instituted this sacrament. Archbishop Cramner, the first Anglican Archbishop said, “there is no place in scripture that declareth this sacrament to be instituted of Christ.”¹² But others have argued that it was instituted by Christ’s apostles during the first century.

Neunheuser has argued that confirmation and baptism have close ties and that confirmation is the completion of the baptismal rite:

However one interprets the relationship between baptism and confirmation in detail, three New Testament texts make it clear and certain that a laying on of hands for imparting of the Holy Spirit, performed after water-bath and as a complement to this bath existed already in the earliest apostolic times. These texts are: Acts 8:4-20 and 19:1-7, and Hebrew 6:1-6.¹³

He has argued that the early church saw two important things that needed to happen within the confirmation rite: 1) the laying on of hands and 2) the imparting of the

¹² Kendig Cully, *Confirmation: History, Doctrine and Practice* (Greenwich, CT: Seabury Press, 1962), 21.

¹³ Neunheuser, 42.

Holy Spirit. This is clear in Acts 8:14-17. The Samaritans had been baptized in the name of Jesus, but had not yet received the Holy Spirit. Peter and John then laid their hands on them and prayed that they would receive the Holy Spirit:

When the Apostles back in Jerusalem heard that people of Samaria had accepted God's message, they sent Peter and John there. As soon as they arrived, they prayed for these new Christians to receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them, for they had only been baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John laid their hands upon these believers, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Later in Acts the Apostle Paul explains immediately after water baptism the strong connection with the laying on of hands to the twelve men and being filled with the Holy Spirit. "As soon as they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in other tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all" (Acts 19:5-7). When Paul and Barnabas were sent out by the elders in Antioch, the elders laid hands on them and prayed. The next verse says they went out with the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:3-4).

A common but not normative pattern in the book of Acts lends evidence to support the fact that once people were baptized, sometime afterwards or immediately afterwards, the newly baptized were prayed over by the leaders through the imposition of laying on hands requesting the Holy Spirit to pour out on them.

Another element that was used for the confirmation rite in the early church but is no longer used by some Anglicans is the practice of anointing with oil. The word, “anoint” means to smear or rub with oil. Anointing with oil does not have any direct links to baptism in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, God’s leaders were anointed with oil demonstrating confirmation of leadership development. His prophets, priests and kings were anointed with oil (Exodus 40:15; 2 Samuel 2:4; 1 Kings 19:16), which seems to have been used as an outward sign of God’s blessing and anointing.

In the New Testament when Jesus delivered his first sermon in Nazareth, he said that he was anointed with the Holy Spirit: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor” (Luke 4:18). Later on Luke says “God has anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power and how He went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him” (Acts 10:38). John and Paul both say that this anointing is for all Christians, “You have been anointed from the Holy One As for you, the anointing you receive from Him remains in you” (1 John 2:20, 27). Paul says, “Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set His seal of ownership on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what was to come” (2 Corinthians 1:21-22). These verses appear to support the idea that there is a strong connection between anointing with oil and anointing with the Spirit.

Historically, the confirmation rite was closely aligned to and part of the complete baptismal rite. Hippolytus wrote the *Apostolic Tradition* for the African church order in

Egypt.¹⁴ In this work, we begin to see the parts of what eventually will become a separate rite: the Confirmation rite. Immediately following the baptism, the newly baptized children, men and women gather before the bishop. The bishop proceeds to lay his hands on them, praying and asking God to fill them with his grace and challenging them to serve God as a potential leader:

Lord God, who has given to these the dignity of meriting the remission of their sins through the bath of regeneration of the Holy Spirit, fill them with your grace that they may serve you according to your will. For to you is the glory, Father and Son, with the Holy Spirit in the holy Church now and forever and ever. Amen¹⁵

The second part of the rite begins immediately following the laying on of the hands. The bishop anoints them with oil, saying, "I give you the anointing with the blessed oil, in the Lord God, the almighty Father, Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit."¹⁶

The third part of the rite begins immediately after the anointing with oil. The bishop then marks each newly baptized member with the sign of the cross and states that

¹⁴ Begley, 12-13.

¹⁵ Begley, 19.

¹⁶ Begley, 19.

God's Spirit is now with them: "The Lord is with you." The person being marked says "and with your spirit." Then the bishop kisses each one of them.

Apostolic tradition is the first liturgy that gives three major actions in the baptism rite that later will become foundational for the confirmation rite: the laying on of hands, the anointing with oil and lastly the marking (*sphragis*) of the cross. However, during this time period there is no separate confirmation rite; these three actions are still very much part of the baptismal rite.

In the *Euchologion* liturgy of Serapion, who was bishop of Thumis in the fourth century, the confirmation rite was still connected closely with the baptism rite. Following baptism, during a prayer for the candidates, two of the three confirmation rite actions are mentioned. It is not clear whether the laying on of hands is implied. Persons were anointed with oil and marked with the impression of the sign of the cross. The prayer was very powerful as it acknowledged that Satan was defeated by the cross. Through one's baptism they were regenerated and renewed. Another key part of the prayer was the invocation of the God to send upon each newly baptized His gift of the Holy Spirit:¹⁷ "let these here also share in the gifts of the Holy Spirit."¹⁸ The prayer then implies that the new candidate was strengthened by the seal; the prayer asked that each candidate remain

¹⁷ Begley, 38.

¹⁸ Begley, 38.

steadfast and immovable and protected from evil. It is not clear whether the seal was referring to the Holy Spirit or to the marking of the cross.

In the *Mystagogical Catechesis* of St. Cyril of Jerusalem from the fourth century, during the third lecture on the mysterious, he talks about the Holy Chrism and anointing. He says that the anointing with Chrism is to take place just as one was raised from the sacred streams (of baptism). Cyril's teachings confirm the action of anointing and make it very clear that the anointing signifies being anointed by the Holy Spirit (oil of gladness):

As Christ was really crucified and buried and rose again, and you at baptism are privileged to be crucified, buried, and raised along with him in a likeness, so also with the Chrism. Christ was anointed with mystical oil of gladness; that is with the Holy Spirit, called oil of gladness because he is the cause of spiritual gladness; so being anointed with ointment, have become partakers and fellow of Christ.¹⁹

The patristic writers make it very clear that the confirmation actions were clearly part of the over-all baptism rite. However, there may have been different traditions in different parts of the Christian communities.

Osborne suggested that there are three factors that led to separate the rite of confirmation sometime during the middle ages. He concludes that de-urbanization of Christian communities, the growing predominance of the practice of infant baptism and

¹⁹ Begley, 89.

the question of ordination of heretics²⁰ all led to the creation of a separate rite of confirmation. As the Christian faith spread to the urban areas, it became much more difficult for the bishop to be present to baptize all of the candidates in the cathedral as he once did. He began to delegate responsibilities to his priests. Infant baptism was on the rise as a result after Christianity became the empire religion.

By the time of the end of medieval era, the confirmation rite was being re-evaluated as a separate rite. Thomas Aquinas understood the confirmation rite to be a sacrament of strengthening, associated with the increase of grace and the arming of the Christian for spiritual warfare.²¹ These may have to deal with taking on the armor of God for battle against the evil forces of the world.

In contemporary Anglican confirmation rites, there seems to be a strong connection with the baptism vows (evangelism and discipleship) affirmed and a call upon the Holy Spirit to guide (leadership development) the candidate. For example, in The Episcopal Church, the candidates for confirmation reaffirm their baptism vows, then the bishop prays:

²⁰ Kenan Osborne, *The Christian Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1987), 122.

²¹ Cully, 21.

Almighty God, we thank you that by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ you have overcome sin and brought us to yourself, and that by the sealing of your Holy Spirit you have bound us to your service. Renew in *these* your *servants* the covenant you made with *them* at *their* Baptism. Send *them* forth in the power of that Spirit to perform the service you set before *them*; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. *Amen*²²

The bishop continues with laying on hands and says, “Strengthen, O Lord, your servant *N.* with your Holy Spirit; empower *him* for your service; and sustain *him* all the days of *his* life. *Amen*” or the more traditional confirmation prayer “Defend, O Lord, your servant *N.* with your heavenly grace, that *he* may continue yours for ever, and daily increase in your Holy Spirit more and more, until *he* comes to your everlasting kingdom. *Amen*”²³ Then the bishop concludes with one more prayer:

Almighty and ever living God, let your fatherly hand ever be over *these* your *servants*; let your Holy Spirit ever be with *them*; and so lead *them* in the knowledge and obedience of your Word, that *they* may serve you in this life, and dwell with you in the life to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*.²⁴

²² *Prayer Book and Hymnal* (New York, NY: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1986), 418.

²³ *Prayer Book and Hymnal*, 418.

²⁴ *Prayer Book and Hymnal*, 418.

The rite clearly focuses on the role of the Holy Spirit. The prayers are requesting the Holy Spirit to guide and direct the person as he matures in Christ. In the rubrics of the confirmation rite, the purpose of the rite is stated, yet the role of the Holy Spirit is neglected:

In the course of their Christian development, those baptized at an early age are expected, when they are ready and have been duly prepared, to make a mature public affirmation of their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their baptism and to receive the laying on hands by the bishop.²⁵

In the Church of England (Anglican), the present day confirmation rite asks the candidate to renew his or her solemn promise and vow made at baptism. Then there is a prayer calling upon the Holy Spirit to give the person the seven-fold gifts of God's grace mentioned in Isaiah 11:2. Afterwards the bishop lays his hands on the person saying, "Confirm, O Lord, your servant with your Holy Spirit. Defend, O Lord, these your servants with your heavenly grace, that they may continue yours forever, in daily increase in your Holy Spirit more and more until they come into your ever-lasting Kingdom, Amen."²⁶ "Through prayer and the laying on of hands by the confirming Bishop, the Church also asks God to give them power through the Holy Spirit to enable them to live

²⁵ *Prayer Book and Hymnal*, 412.

²⁶ The Church of England, <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/lifeevents/baptismconfirm/sectionc.html> (accessed May 11, 2010).

in this way.”²⁷ In this and each of the other cases above, the anointing of oil has been removed from the confirmation rite.

Historically, the relationships among confirmation and evangelism, discipleship and leadership development are very strong. During the service, the candidate reaffirms that he/she agrees to repent, turn away from evil and turn towards Jesus as Lord and Savior. The candidate agrees to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and example. In terms of discipleship, the candidate has begun a fairly lengthy preparation for confirmation and has agreed to continue in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers. There is a strong emphasis on the Holy Spirit calling the person to service (leadership development) and to be sent out into the world. The one area that is lacking is the reproducing of other disciples.

Marriage Rite: Reproduction

The marriage rite as inaugurated by God brings together two single Christians and unites them as one married couple. The two become one united by God. The Christian transitions from being single to the state of being married to someone from the opposite gender. As a result, the formerly single person is introduced to new responsibilities which s/he is responsible to obey and live out to its fullest. No longer single, the two persons

²⁷ The Church of England, <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/lifeevents/baptismconfirm/sectionc.html> (accessed May 11, 2010).

now are equally unified. The two have become one flesh, and they have become married together until death separates them.

Secondly, the married couple has been given the responsibility and privilege to reproduce human beings created in the image of God. There is a strong sense of evangelism, discipleship, and leadership development. The married partners are to multiply, increase, guard and equip their children for service to the Lord.

The roots of the marriage rite are found in Genesis 2. Marriage was part of God's original plan to complete Adam. In Genesis 2:18-25, God created Adam and Eve:

The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." ... But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

There are two key words in this passage: "helper" and "suitable." Understanding these words will shed light on the rite of marriage. The Hebrew word for helper is *ezer*; it is used 21 times in the Old Testament. Most English Bibles have translated it as

“helper,”²⁸ “help meet,”²⁹ “partner,”³⁰ and “companion;”³¹ however, these translations fall short of the Hebrew meaning. The Hebrew word implies that it comes from two root verbs meaning to “save/rescue” and “to be strong.”³² It has been argued that over time these two verbs assimilated into one. There is strong evidence that when *ezer* is used, for example in Deuteronomy 33:26, 29,³³ and when combined with *oz* or *uzzo* or majesty, it always refers to strength:³⁴

The case that begins to build is that we can be sure that *`ezer* means “strength” or “power” whenever it is used in parallelism with words for majesty or other words for power such as *`oz* or *`uzzo*. In fact, the presence of two names for one king, Azariah and Uzziah, both referring to God's strength, makes it abundantly clear that the root *`ezer* meaning “strength” was known in Hebrew.³⁵

²⁸ New International Version.

²⁹ King James Version.

³⁰ Contemporary English version.

³¹ Complete Jewish Bible.

³² R. David Freedman, “Woman, A Power Equal to Man,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* Volume 9:1 (Jan/Feb 1983), 56-58.

³³ “There is none like the God of Jeshurun, The Rider of the Heavens in your strength and on the clouds in his majesty” (Deuteronomy 33:26). “Blessed are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord? He is the shield of your strength (*`-z-r*) and the sword of your majesty” (Deuteronomy 33:29).

³⁴ Fifteen of the nineteen other references speak of the help that God alone can provide (Exodus 18:4; Deuteronomy 33:7, 26, 29; Psalms 20:2, 33:20, 70:5, 115:9-11, 121:1-2, 124:8, 146:5; Hosea 13:9). Deuteronomy 33:29, “God, He is your shield and helper (*`ezer*—strength).”

³⁵ Walter C. Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the Old Testament* (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1988), 25.

Therefore, a more appropriate translation for *`ezer* in this context is not that she is a rescuer or savior of Adam but rather a new creature like Adam, a powerful being, and superior to the animals.

The second English word translated in a variety of ways, “suitable,”³⁶ “fit,”³⁷ “as a partner,”³⁸ “counterpart,”³⁹ “companion,”⁴⁰ is the word *kenegdo* in Hebrew. It is more difficult to translate because there are only two Hebrew references to it in the Old Testament: the first in Genesis 2:18 and the second in verse 20. Basically they say the same thing. Walter Kaiser argues the best way to understand this word biblically is in its context:

The line of reasoning which stresses full equality is continued in Genesis 2:23 where Adam says Eve: “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man.” The idiomatic sense of this phrase bone of my bones is a “*very close relative*,” “*one of us*” or in effect “*our equal*.”⁴¹

³⁶ New International Version.

³⁷ English Standard Version.

³⁸ New Revised Standard.

³⁹ Young’s Literal Translation.

⁴⁰ The Message.

⁴¹ Kaiser, 26.

It was never intended for woman to be a helper or an assistant. Walter Kaiser suggests it be translated “I will make a power corresponding (equal) to man”... “If this is so, then God makes the man and woman fully his equal and fully his match. In this way, man’s loneliness will be assuaged.”⁴² From this translation, the rite of marriage was part of God’s plan and was based on equality and partnership of both spouses.

The later part of this paragraph in Genesis 2 seems to explain the reason for this rite of passage: “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh” (Verse 24). At first this verse seems to contradict most patriarchic cultures by suggesting a man will leave his father and mother. Certainly in male dominated societies in some African cultures, such as the Borana, the Samburu, and the Gabbra in Northern Kenya, it is common practice for a woman to leave her home of origin and be united to her husband, joining his tribe or family or village. Yet it is just the opposite in this picture; the man is the one to leave. By focusing on the man, the author makes the case that leaving occurs for both the man and the woman:⁴³

The verb translated “leave” (עָזַב, ’azab) normally means “to abandon, to forsake, to leave behind, to discard,” when used with human subject and object (see Joshua 22:3; 1 Samuel 30:13; Psalms 27:10; Proverbs 2:17; Isaiah 54:6, 60:15, 62:4; Jeremiah 49:11). Within the context of the ancient Israelite extended family structure, this cannot refer to emotional

⁴² Kaiser, 25-26.

⁴³ Steve Zeisler, <http://www.pbc.org/files/messages/7648/4556.html> (accessed May 14, 2010).

or geographical separation. The narrator is using hyperbole to emphasize the change in perspective that typically overtakes a young man when his thoughts turn to love and marriage.⁴⁴

But the passage does not only talk about leaving but also about cleaving:

The perfect with *vav* (ו) consecutive carries the same habitual or characteristic nuance as the preceding imperfect. The verb is traditionally translated “cleaves [to]”; it has the basic idea of “stick with/to” (e.g., it is used of Ruth resolutely staying with her mother-in-law in Ruth 1:14). In this passage it describes the *inseparable* relationship between the man and the woman in marriage as God intended it.⁴⁵

The idea of leaving and cleaving are strongly connected in a marriage. It is the result of love in marriage. It is the transition of separating from one’s family of origin and connecting to the new spouse to make a new union. The abandonment of the biological family is only in terms of their residence and single life responsibilities. They still have responsibilities in honoring and respecting their parents. The new marriage will bring about new responsibilities to his/her spouse and children.

When Adam sees Eve, he says she is “flesh of my flesh and bone of my bones.” But it is God and his handiwork that fashions woman. The word “flesh” *basar* in Hebrew refers not only a sexual union, but also infers the concept of bringing into being a new

⁴⁴NET Bible Studies Environment. Bible Studies Foundation (Bible Studies Press(BSP),2006), <http://net.bible.org/?Gen%202:24> (accessed May 13, 2010).

⁴⁵ <http://net.bible.org/?Gen%202:24> (accessed May 13, 2010).

family unit. The phrase “one flesh” occurs only in Genesis 2:18 and must be interpreted in light of verse 23. There the man declares that the woman is “bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh.” To be one’s “bone and flesh” is to be related by blood to someone (Genesis 29:14; Judges 9:2; 2 Samuel 5:1, 19:12, 13, 17:2; 1 Chronicles 2:16-17) as if s/he were family:

In this first marriage in human history, the woman was literally formed from the man’s bone and flesh. Even though later marriages do not involve such a divine surgical operation, the first marriage sets the pattern for how later marriages are understood and explains why marriage supersedes the parent-child relationship.⁴⁶

One purpose of marriage is explained in Genesis 1:28 when God calls both man and woman “to be fruitful and increase in number.” As long as man is alone he is not able to fulfill the marriage blessing that God gave him. It was going to take both of them equally to evangelize the world, to be fruitful and multiply the earth. It is within this context that woman was created as an equal companion.

As in all cultures, the birth of a child is an occasion for joyous celebration in Judaism. Indeed, the first commandment in the Torah is to “be fruitful and multiply” (Genesis 1:28).

⁴⁶ <http://net.bible.org/?Gen%202:24> (accessed May 13, 2010).

Just as the Old Testament makes clear the purpose of God in the rite of marriage as one being created in the image of God, of equal value and both participating equally in being fruitful and multiplying human beings on earth, the New Testament explanation of the role of husbands and wives and the function of their relationship has been hotly debated. One of the most contested texts regarding marital roles is found in Ephesians 5:21-31. Paul begins to explain the relationships between husband and wife; parents and children; and slaves and masters. There are two points of controversy: one is found in verse 21 when Paul says “submit yourselves to one another out of reverence for Christ.” The issue revolves around where verse 21 connects. Is it the end of the previous verses 18-20, or does it refer to the forthcoming relationships mentioned above, or is it only pertaining to the husband/wife relationship? Since verse 22 says “Wives ... to your husband as to the Lord” and does not have a verb, most scholars have accepted the translation to refer to “submit yourselves” borrowing from verse 21. However, Hurley argues that it was common for Paul to use a transitional sentence that both concludes one train of thought and introduces another.⁴⁷ Therefore verse 21 was seen as a transitional sentence that ends the thought of the previous sentences and begins with the Christian perspective of marital relations. Either way, verse 21 makes it clear that both husbands and wives are to submit themselves out of respect for Christ.

⁴⁷ James Hurley, *Man and Women in the Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1981), 139-140.

What is clear in verse 21 is that their relationship with each other can only be understood in their relationship with Christ. Both spouses were to understand that their relationship with Christ was central to their being. If that relationship with Christ was not what it was supposed to be, then there was no way one would be able to live out a human relationship that would bring glory to God. Each spouse's relationship with Jesus is the basis upon which each begins to function properly in a marriage.

With this in mind, one can proceed to look at "submit" in verse 21. The Greek word *hypotasso* is used fifty-three times⁴⁸ and comes from the word *tasso* which means "put in order," "to arrange or put in place."⁴⁹ But when it is combined to make *hypotasso* it implies "to make subject to," "to submit to oneself" or "to be obedient to."

Grudem⁵⁰ and Hurley⁵¹ both argue that *hypotasso* is always used in New Testament in the context of authority. Following are just a few examples where it is used to support this interpretation: Jesus was submissive to his parents (Luke 2:51); demons are subject to Jesus' disciples (Luke 10:17); Christians submit to governing authorities (Romans 13:1); Christians are to be subject to God (Hebrews 12:9; James 4:7); church

⁴⁸ Hurley, 142.

⁴⁹ G. Delling, *The Tyndale New Testament Commentary*, Volume 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: William Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000), 27-48.

⁵⁰ Grudem, 45.

⁵¹ Hurley, 142.

members are to be subjected to the elders in the church (1 Peter 5:5); in spiritual gifts, that the gift of prophecy is submissive to the prophet (1 Corinthians 12:32); God has put all things in subjection to Christ (1 Corinthians 15:27); angels and other spiritual beings have been subject to Christ (1 Peter 3:22); and, servants are subjective to their masters (Titus 2:9). Therefore, *hypotasso* has a strong case for referring to authority.

The other Greek word *allelous*, which is usually translated “one another,” has two different connotations unlike *hypotasso*, which biblically is always connected to authority. On the one hand, it means “one another” from everyone to everyone, such as in the new commandment that Jesus gave his disciples that they were to “love one another” (John 13:34). However, it also means “some to others.” For example, in Revelations 6:4 the rider on the red horse “was permitted to take peace from earth, so that men should slay one another.” This could not mean that everyone was slaying each other reciprocally. How could a dead person slay one who was alive? Therefore it refers to “some to others.” Another example is found in Galatians 6:2, “bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” Does Paul actually mean we are to give each other our burdens as if we are switching them? It seems to imply that some would bear the burdens for others who are not able. And in 1 Corinthians 11:33 Paul says “when you come together to eat, wait for another.” This does not mean that those who are early need to wait for those who are

late and those who are late are to wait for those who are early. The point is that *allelous* can also mean “some to others.”⁵²

Therefore, submitting to one another in the Ephesians can take the sense some be subject to others if the context fits or requires this meaning. And as we have seen above, the word translated “submitting to” requires this sense, because it is never used to speak of a reciprocal relationship between persons but always signifies one directional submission to an authority.⁵³

Therefore, the Apostle Paul seems to imply that the wife’s function in a marriage is to submit voluntarily and self-imposed to the husband’s authority in the context of their relationship with Jesus Christ, “wives, submit yourselves to your husbands as to the Lord ... now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit themselves to their husbands in everything” (Ephesians 5:22, 24). For the husband “husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy... in the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own. He who loves his wife loves himself is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the savior” (Ephesians 5:25, 28).

⁵² Other examples: Matthew 24:10; Luke 2:15, 12:1, 24:32.

⁵³ Grudem, 229.

There also has been a significant debate over the word “head” (*kephale*) found in verse 23. There are at least three different meanings found in the New Testament for this word. One refers to authority (Ephesians 1:22), another refers to physical head (1 Corinthians 11:7) and the third, the source of or beginning of something (Colossians 1:18). Most scholars debate over whether this word “head” refers to authority or the source of beginning of something. From Grudem’s extensive historical research of 2,336 examples of the word *kephale* in ancient Greek literature, from the eight century BC up to fourth century AD, he found that it never applied to a person without governing authority. It always referred to a person with governing authority:

The fact remains that no one has yet produced one text in ancient Greek Literature (from the eight century BC, to the fourth century AD) where a person is called *kephale* (“head”) of another person or group and that person is not the one in authority over that other person or group.... Why should we give *kephale* in the New Testament a sense that it is nowhere attested to have, and that, when applied to persons, no Greek lexicon has ever given it?⁵⁴

According to his conclusion, it would be difficult to argue that it supports mutual authority as the egalitarians would suggest. However, the author is not totally convinced of Grudem’s arguments because he has not been able to tackle and discuss the Hebrew

⁵⁴ Grudem, 48.

understanding of creation of male and female, that God created female corresponding equal to male before the fall.

The marriage rite has strong ties to biological evangelism, discipleship and reproducing potential leaders. The marriage rite is God-given to bring the couple together for the purpose of reproducing other children. It is also for the purpose of bringing them together so that they may grow and nurture each other.

The Death/Burial Rites

The death/burial rite is the transition from the physical and bodily temporal life to the spiritual eternal life. It is the transition from the material to the immortal. The death/burial rite brings out similar images in evangelism. On the one hand, the death of sin and burial of evil, and on the other, the images of the new and eternal life.

Burial was very important to the Israelites. We see that illustrated by the story of Abraham and the purchase of a cave for the burial of his wife Sarah (Gen. 23:4-19). We also hear about the importance of taking Jacob's body back to Cana to be buried in the tomb in Genesis 50:4-14. Joseph's body, which was buried in Egypt, was exhumed, taken with the Israelites, and eventually buried in Canaan (Genesis 50:22-26).

The burial preparation for the body was instrumental for every Jew. For example:

- 1) The body was washed before placing into the ground (Acts 9:37).
- 2) The body was anointed (Matthew 26:12).
- 3) The body was wrapped in a linen cloth (John 11:44).
- 4) The body was wrapped with hands together and feet together and the face was bound by a napkin (John 11:44).
- 5) Jesus' body was wrapped in linen cloth with spices (John 19:40).
- 6) Perfumes were burned (Jeremiah 34:5).
- 7) They are embalmed and put in a coffin (Genesis 50:26).

Places that bodies were buried include:

- 1) Natural caves (Genesis 23:19; Matthew 27:60)
- 2) Gardens (2 Kings 21:18)
- 3) Under trees (1 Samuel 31:13)
- 4) On a hill top (Joshua 24:33)
- 5) In the house of the deceased (1 Samuel 25:1)
- 6) The city of David for the Kings of Judah (1 Kings 2:10)

There is substantial information regarding the theology of death that has close connections with evangelism. Most of the New Testament information regarding death is in connection with a relationship to Jesus Christ. This is first illustrated in the baptism: the death of the old life and all of its sin and selfishness, and then in the emerging new life reflected in one's baptism:

The span of a Christian biography stretches from death and rebirth in baptism, to what was called ‘second death,’ to the final resurrection. In a sense, then, baptism was the first Christian death ritual. In the fourth century Bishop Ambrose of Milan (374-397 A.D.) taught that the baptismal font was like a tomb because baptism was a ritual of death and resurrection. Bishop Ambrose also urged baptized Christians to look forward to death with joy, for physical death was just a way-station on the way to paradise. Some of his younger contemporaries, like Augustine of Hippo, held a different view. Baptism did not guarantee salvation, preached Augustine, only God could do that. The proper response to death ought to be fear – of both human sinfulness and God’s inscrutable judgment.⁵⁵

One significant passage frequently used in funeral services is from 1 Corinthians 15. The Apostle Paul informed the Corinthians about the resurrection of Christ and how our future resurrection is directly associated with Christ’s resurrection. Paul shows how the resurrection of Jesus not only proves his own resurrection, but it proves the principle of resurrection. If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. If these Corinthians were right about the resurrection, then Jesus is still dead. Paul goes on to say that if Christ is not risen, then one’s preaching is useless, one’s witness for God is void, and one’s faith is in vain.

Paul continues to speak about Christ, saying “but now Christ has risen from the dead, and has now become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep... and then he says, but each one in his own order; Christ the first fruits, afterward those who are Christ at his coming.” However, for one to better understand the reference to first fruits, from

⁵⁵ Frederick S. Paxton, “History of Christian Death Rites,” *Encyclopedia of Death and Dying*, www.deathreference.com/Ce-Da/Christian-Death-Rites-History-of.html (accessed June 1, 2010).

the Greek word, *aparche*, in the Septuagint, this word is used for the offering of first fruits. For instance, when people were to bring the first fruits of the harvest mentioned in Leviticus 23:9-14, it was expected that this would be the best part of the harvest and it would be dedicated to the Lord. It was also seen as paving the way forward for what God was going to bless them with. In the same way, Jesus, was the first fruit of the future resurrection. He was the one who was resurrected eternally, as will be all of his followers.

In the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries, the church began to create a liturgical burial rite:

In spite of the centrality of death in the theology and spiritual anthropology of early Christians, they were slow to develop specifically Christian responses to death and dying. The most immediate change was that Christians handle the bodies of the dead without fear of pollution. The purification of baptism was permanent, unless marred by mortal sin, and the corpse of a Christian prefigured the transformed body that would be resurrected into eternal life at the end of time. The Christian living had less need than their neighbors to appease their dead, who were themselves less likely to return as unhappy ghosts. Non-Christians noted the joyous mood at Christian funerals and the ease of the participants in the presence of the dead. They observed how Christians gave decent burial to even the poorest of the poor. Normal Roman practice was to dump them in large pits away from the well-kept family tombs lining the roads outside the city walls.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Paxton, www.deathreference.com/Ce-Da/Christian-Death-Rites-History-of.html (accessed June 1, 2010).

Augustine of Hippo explains about different ways of burial rites taking place in the Christian communities. He even said that the western church seemed to be having the Eucharist as the burial rite even though the African church did not. Apparently, the Council at Nicea approved the Eucharistic rite or what others have call the *viaticum* referring to food for the journey. “In the 4th century there was a practice among some Christians that was called the *viaticum*. This was the practice of placing the Eucharistic bread in the mouth of the dead. Apparently, it replaced a pagan tradition of placing a coin in the mouth of the corpse to pay the fare of the Charon.”⁵⁷

The death/burial rite historically was an important event in lives of Israelites. The early Christians asked Paul about the meaning of death. In the patristic years, the burial rite had some interesting twists and turns such as the *viaticum* which may make contemporary people cringe. But consistent over the years in the burial rite has been the theological imagery also found in evangelism. One cannot think of death without thinking about eternal life.

⁵⁷ www.augnet.org/default.asp?ipageid=309 (accessed June 1, 2010).

There is strong biblical and historical substantiation to link the importance of the Judeo-Christian rites of passage. From the beginning of the human life to the departure of the soul, from the first breath to the last breath of human life, the Christian Church has found it imperative to integrate these rites of passage as symbolic to the spiritual development of the individual in the community of faith. These rites are full of content referring to the significance of evangelism, discipleship and leadership development in the person. Therefore, how does one honor these Christian rites of passage in developing a methodology for reproducing Christian leaders in the Eklesia Episkopaly Malagasy?

CHAPTER IV PROJECT DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In Chapter I, the author set the parameters of this paper by stating the problem and the setting. The problem pertains to the insufficient number of quality leaders being reproduced in the Eklesia Episkopaly Malagasy Church and is directly related to the lack of a process or structure within the church for nurturing and raising up Christian leadership. This problem permeates the ecclesiastical structures at a variety of different levels of the church, including but not limited to, theological education, clergy preparation, and administration of parish churches by local volunteers.

In Chapter II, from a biblical and theological point of view, the author demonstrated that revival was a prerequisite to reproducing leaders. The Bible gives ample evidence to the fact that evangelism, discipleship and leadership development are all essential to reproducing African Christian leaders. Without them, one is unable to sustain growth and reproduction, nor to fulfill Jesus' Great Commission.

In Chapter III, the author discussed that the Judeo-Christian culture historically has provided different rites of passages. It has offered rites such as naming/birth, circumcision, baptism, confirmation, marriage, and death/burial. Part of the richness of the Judeo-Christian culture is that it has created rites of passages that are grounded in scripture and in culture.

In this chapter, the author will further describe the African Cycle of Life in the context of rites of passage; report findings from the author's interviews with three key informants; and contrast Judeo-Christian rites of passage with Malagasy rites of passage, examining the relevance of both to a model for reproducing Christian leaders that draws upon scriptural grounding in evangelism, discipleship, and leadership.

The African Cycle of Life

For one to understand the African world view, one needs to know African culture. One part of understanding African culture is through examining African Traditional Religion and the African Cycle of Life. It is in the African Life Cycle (see Diagram 1) that one begins to connect the people and the rites of passage leading to the development of African leaders.

The first stage of the life cycle is the birth/naming rite of passage for the infant or child. It is the rite(s) where an infant or child is recognized as a person in the local community. In some African cultures, an infant is not considered a human being until he/she has been given a name. Sometimes this can take up to two years after birth. The infant is generally named after a grandparent either dead or alive, or a particular season or circumstances revolving around the birth.

The second stage of the life cycle is the initiation rite. This rite of passage demonstrates a movement forward from one state of being in the community to another.

In this case it represents moving from being a child to becoming a young adult. In some parts of Africa this is demonstrated by circumcision and pulling of teeth for both males and females.

The third stage of the life cycle is the marriage rite. This rite of passage demonstrates moving from a single young adult with limited responsibilities to a married adult who is expected to reproduce additional offspring in the family. This passage represents moving from celibacy to marriage and having children. These new members have full rights and responsibilities in the community but not at the level of eldership.

The fourth stage of the life cycle is a newly identified eldership rite. In analyzing the interview data, the author found that an additional rite should be added to the African Life Cycle: the eldership rite.

In order to better understand this newly identified stage, the author found it necessary and appropriate to follow up with additional questions pertaining to this rite. The author met with the Masikoro *mpisoro* to ask him about the eldership rite.¹ The main focus was to ask how one becomes an elder (leader) in the community. Additional follow up questions were asked relating to the characteristics and requirements for one to become a leader.

¹ Re, interview by author, Toliara, Madagascar, September 20, 2010.

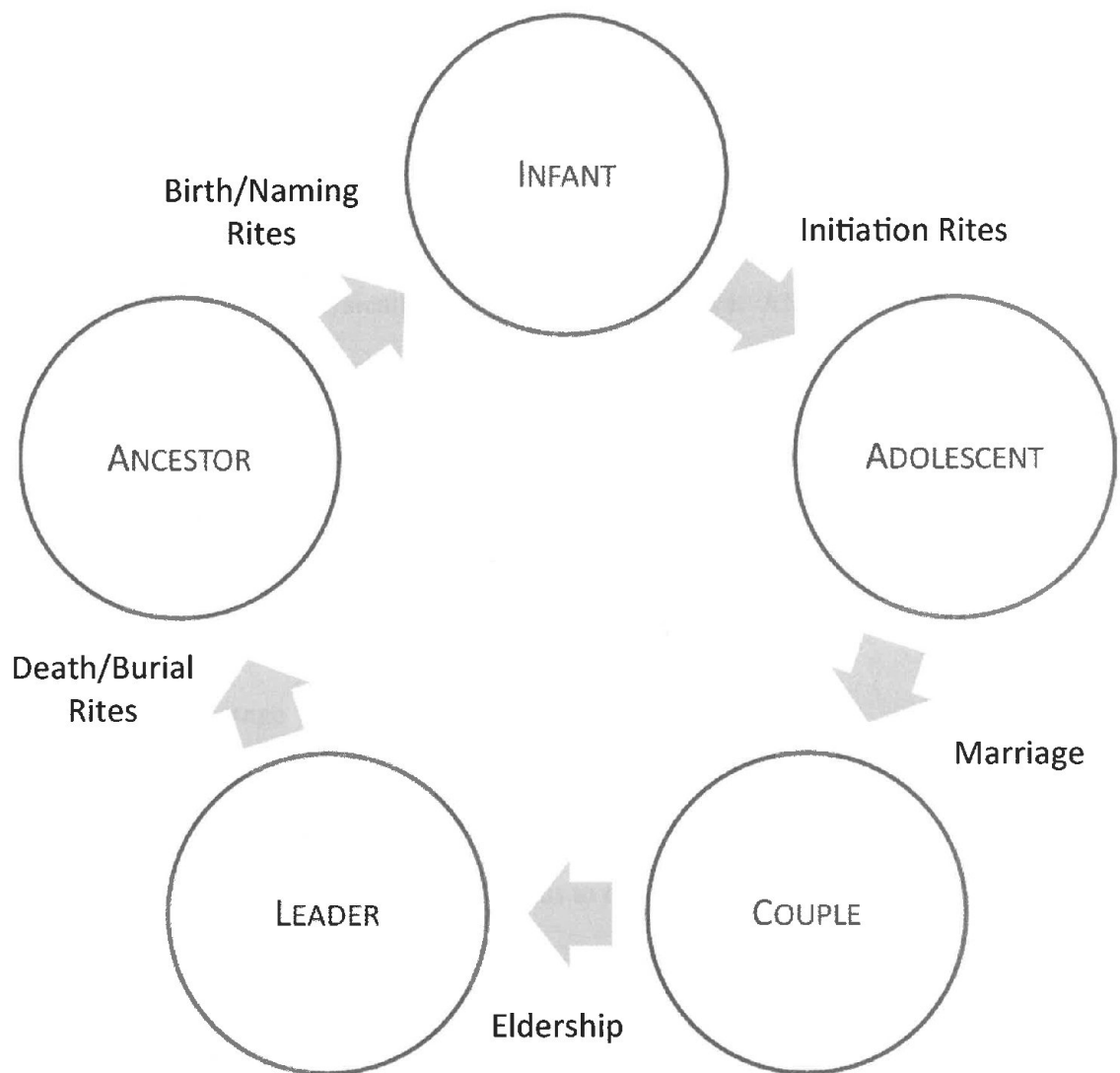


Figure 1. African Traditional Religion Life Cycle (People and Rites)

The fifth stage is the death/burial rite. This rite of passage demonstrates moving from the highest level of community responsibility to entrance into the spiritual world and receiving the new title of ancestor. This rite occurs when the family and community gather to give the family elder a proper burial. It is through this rite that the newly departed is considered physically dead, but spiritually alive. Africans call them the “living dead.” The family members of deceased elders believe their ancestors are still living and active in community. Therefore, there are many regular routines and daily chores that include the participation of the ancestors, such as daily oblations or food tossed on the ground for the ancestors to consume.

The Rites of Passage

A rite of passage is a ritual or ceremony that occurs within the local community and advances a person from one social status to the next, from one stage of life to the next. Yet, there are many rites of passage in an African context that help a person move and advance through the life cycle. A few of these rites are birth, naming, initiation, marriage, eldership, and death (“living dead”). As a person moves from one stage to another, certain practices and responsibilities are expected from the individual(s) and the community. Certain themes become evident which are not only progressive in one sense but also intertwine like a spider’s web. Some common themes to look for in the model are relational, instructional, covenantal, traditional and interventional (see figure 2).

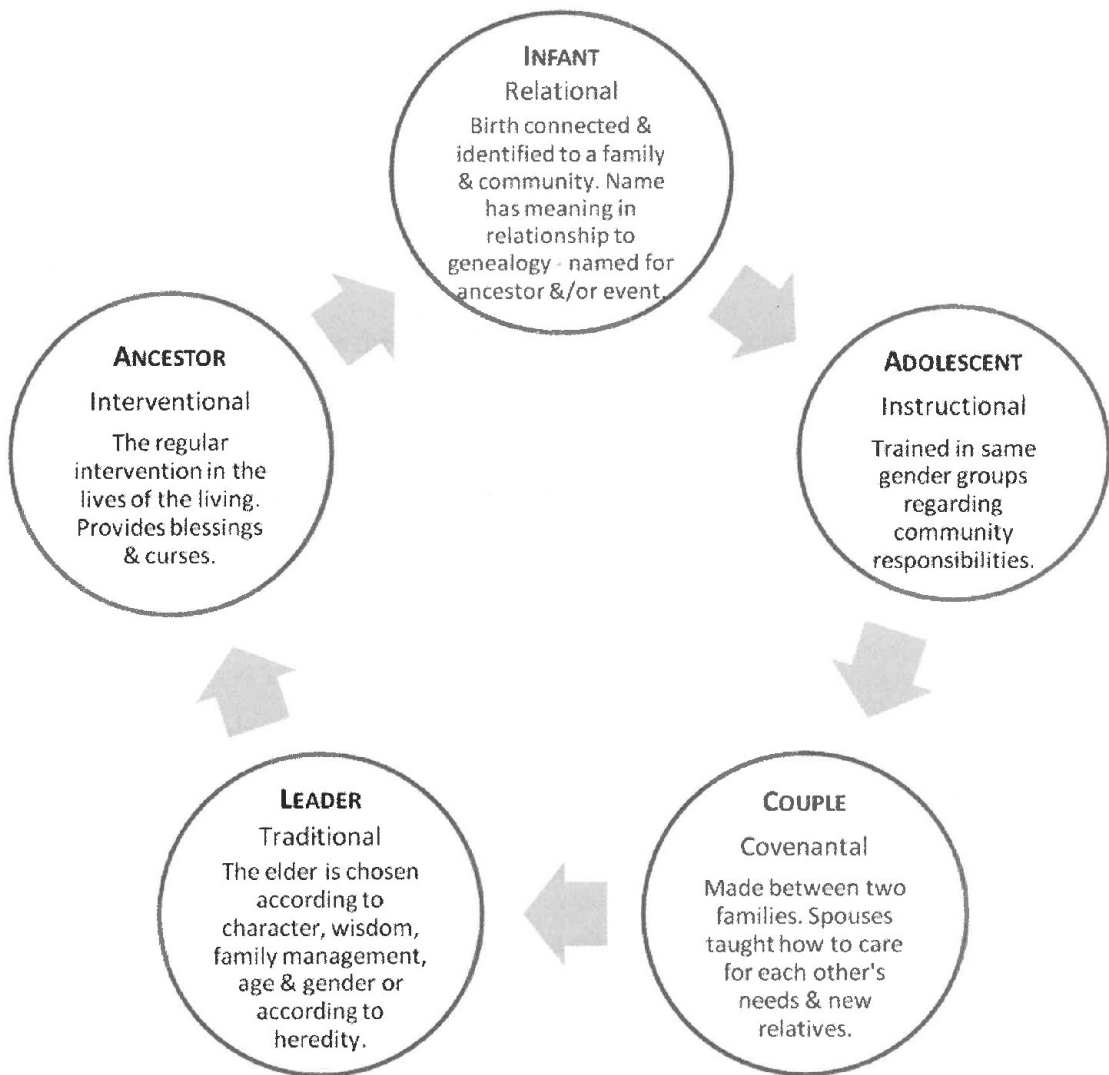


Figure 2. African Traditional Religion Themes in the Life Cycle

In addition, French anthropologist Arnold Van Gennep identified three universal stages of the process in rites of passage: preliminary (separation/seclusion), liminaire (transition), postliminaire (integration/incorporation).²

The preliminary stage is characterized by separation and seclusion of the individual. The person is secluded from the rest of the community in preparation for transition. This symbolizes the concept of death and resurrection. For example, on the one hand the individual “dies” (seen by separation from the rest of the village) and then is symbolically “resurrected” to a fuller state of life. When the person comes out of seclusion, he then begins the process of transition. There is no turning back or returning to the previous status or position in the community.

The liminaire stage is characterized by the transitional phase. The person begins this phase of the unknown, being part of both worlds, but is not yet in either of them. This stage is the most uncomfortable. The rite of passage moves a person from one position in the community to another and is a phase of progression.

The postliminaire stage is the incorporation of the person into the life of the community with a new status. This is the stage when the main part of the rite is

² Arnold Van Gennep, *Rites of Passage* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 11.

celebrated in the community. The local community participates, recognizes and supports this incorporation.

All stages in the rites of passage symbolize transference of one's position of an individual to another, advancing his or her position in the local community. A man or woman has now moved from one status to another. For example, a person was single but now is married. That person's position has changed and with that new status come additional responsibilities for the care and protection of his spouse and future children. He is not expected to do certain things as he did when he was single.

Methodology

The methodology chosen for this project is multi-phased and includes comprehensive personal interviews of elders in three different ethnic groups living in Southern Madagascar pertaining to local rites of passages, customs, and beliefs. The author will train Christian workers and leaders in Southern Madagascar, and evangelistic students training in Toliara regarding an African Model for reproducing Christian leaders. It is significant to note that the author has also presented an introduction to reproducing Christian leaders by using an African Model in two workshops in the United States of America.

The following provides further information on the methodology that has been implemented by the author:

- 1) Examine scripture to see if there is any evidence to support evangelism, discipleship and leadership development;
- 2) Interview representatives from three different Malagasy ethnic groups, each of whom is a priest of the African Traditional Religion, pertaining to five rites of passage mentioned above (birth/naming, initiation, marriage, eldership and death/burial) in order to identify and describe the African Life Cycle and rites of passage;
- 3) Analyze data collected through the interviews, with particular attention to observing and analyzing connections between and among the key concepts in the African rites of passage, the Christian rites of passage, and the scriptural support of evangelism, discipleship and leadership development;
- 4) Adapt and apply these connections to the proposed African Model for reproducing Malagasy Christian leaders;
- 5) Incorporate the African Model for reproducing Malagasy Christian leaders into the core curriculum of the leadership training program in Southern Madagascar.
- 6) Test the proposed model in training for Christian leadership with clergy, evangelists, and lay leaders, and potential leaders, i.e., students training to become evangelists or clergy from the Eklesia Episkopaly Malagasy in southern Madagascar.

Interviews with Malagasy Elders

The author had the great privilege of interviewing three distinguished and respected elders in the southern part of Madagascar. Each elder³ came from a different ethnic group in Southern Madagascar. Re (62 years old), a local shaman from the Masikoro ethnic group, lives in Toliara (located on the coastline of southwestern Madagascar). He is responsible for carrying out and performing all of the priestly duties of the Masikoro traditions. EG (78 years old) is from the Sakalava Menabe ethnic group living in Morondava (on the western coast of Madagascar). He is one of the local chiefs and is responsible for ensuring the Sakalava Menabe customs are continued. Ras (65 years old) is from the Vezo Sara ethnic group living on the coast one hour north of Toliara. He is a local priest of the African Traditional Religion.

The author spent at least 10 hours in interviews with these three elders on four separate occasions. In February 2009 and September 2010 the author discussed rites of passage with Re; in January 2010, the author spent 3 hours with EG and his son; and on August 13, 2010, the author met with Ras for 2.5 hours.

Each interviewee was very pleased to know that someone was truly interested in learning about his own culture. The author's initial questions were open-ended and

³ Each elder has been given a pseudonym to protect his identity.

designed to allow the interviewees to say whatever they thought was important about the rite of passage - whatever first came to their conscience. The questions were intended to allow the interviewees to have as much freedom and flexibility as possible in responding. Only after the interviewees stopped talking did the author then ask follow-up questions and become more specific and direct in questioning. This approach allowed interviewees to express what immediately came to mind regarding each rite.

Questions Asked During Interviews

Birth/pregnancy Rite - Tell me about the rites of birth

- What customs are done?
- What is the purpose of birth?
- What is forbidden for the women to do during pregnancy?
- Is the man allowed to be present for delivery of the new born? Why not?
- What is done during pregnancy? What is done immediately afterwards? What happens to the placenta and umbilical cord?
- Are any rituals or ceremonies performed after the birth? Who comes to the ritual/ceremony?
- What is the purpose of the ritual? Is its purpose to protect the mother or child? Was an animal killed?
- Who names the child? Is the child named after someone or something?

- Anything the child must drink?
- Anything the child is given?
- Are the mother and child put into seclusion after the birth? For how long?
- What about the birth of twins? Is one killed? Why?
- Does the woman stand up giving birth? Sit or lie down on her back?
- Is there anything given to the baby to wear?
- Are any prayers said?
- Are the mother and baby separated from the other people? Or just the baby?

Naming Rite - Explain to me the naming rite

- What are the customs?
- What is the purpose?
- Are there any ceremonies/rituals with naming?
- How is the name chosen?
- Named after seasons, named after a circumstance? Named after a grandparent?
- When is the child named? One week, two weeks, one year?
- Do people come to visit? Bring gifts?
- Are any prayers said? What are they?
- Is the hair of the baby shaved?

Initiation Rite - What about the initiation rite

- What is done for boys?
- What is done for girls?
- Is there a training prior or afterwards?

Marriage Rite - What about the marriage rite

- What customs are done? Before, during, after the ceremony?
- What does each mean?
- What is the purpose?
- Are there prayers? Is so, what prayers are offered?

Eldership Rite

- How does one become an elder?⁴
- What are the requirements for one to become an elder?
- What are the characteristics of an elder?
- What are an elder's responsibilities?

⁴ Author was only able to interview the Masikoro *mpisoro* regarding this rite.

Death/Burial Rite - What happens at the death/burial rite?

- What customs are associated with death/burial? Is food given? Are animals killed?
- What happens when someone dies?
- Are men and women buried the same way?
- What prayers are said?
- How is the body treated?

Introducing the African Model of Reproducing Christian Leaders to the Leaders in Southern Madagascar

The author began introducing the African Model for reproducing Christian leaders in the Malagasy context and culture in Toliara in March 2007. Leaders were gathered together, including three clergy, four evangelists, and 20 lay leaders, to be trained to reproduce Malagasy Christian leaders in the context of evangelism, discipleship and leadership development. The training was conducted by the author over a five-day period at St. Lioka's Church, Eklesia Episkopaly Malagasy. The author introduced the leaders to the concept of African Traditional Religion (Diagram 1). He also trained the attendees in the process of reproducing Christian leaders as it relates to the African Life Cycle. In this part of the training, the author introduced the first of three progressive modules/courses to the participants.

The first level course, Membership Course 101, sets out the foundation of the Christian faith. The central question in this course is “What do Christians believe?” The course examines a basic understanding of the role and uniqueness of the three persons in the Trinity and of the universal church. Membership Course 101 introduces the roots of the Anglican Communion and its tenets, liturgy, history, uniqueness, and policy. This course was designed for new converts and those seeking a better understanding of the basics of the Christian faith. The biblical basis for this course comes from Hebrews 6:1-3, “Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and the eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so.”

In November 2008, four clergy, six evangelists, and approximately 20 leaders returned to Toliara for an additional five days of training. This second level training, Maturity Course 201, sets out the premise that all Christians need to grow spiritually. To mature in the Christian faith, one needs to implement disciplines in one’s life. An often used quote for this module is “Sow a thought, reap an action; sow an action, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap character; sow character, reap destiny.” There are six disciplines implemented in Maturity Course 201: daily devotions (praise, studying scripture, and prayer); giving time, talent, and tithe; obedience to God’s will supported by scripture; fasting; evangelism; and discipling, which also includes Bible study. To successfully complete this course, it is expected that all six disciplines will be faithfully observed as a

life-long pursuit. The biblical basis for this course is from Ephesians 4:1, “As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received,” and Acts 2:42, “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

Integrating the Model as Core Curriculum for the Students (Evangelist and Clergy) in Toliara

In 2007, the author decided that it was imperative to begin a structured training program for all future leaders in the church. The program was designed for the following reasons: to train future leaders in evangelism; to introduce the mission and vision of the southern Eklesia Episkopaly Malagasy; and to implement the model for reproducing Christian leaders in southern Madagascar.

The students completed an application for the program and were interviewed by the local parish, followed by a second interview by the author and a select committee from the Eklesia Episkopaly Malagasy. The students were selected for the program based on their personal calling, character, and chemistry (interacting in community). The program lasts at least one year, with a six-month residency at St. Lioka’s Church, Eklesia Episkopaly Malagasy, in Toliara and a six-month internship in various diocesan parishes. The first class began in January 2008 and consisted of five participants.

In January 2008, when the author began training the five student evangelists, he introduced and taught the model for reproducing Malagasy Christian leaders as the

central core curriculum in the context of evangelism and discipleship. It was repeated in January of 2009 (seven students) and 2010 (eight students) for all of those new students interested in either becoming evangelists or clergy. As described above, the program consists of the Introduction course, Membership Course 101, Maturity Course 201, and Leadership Course 301. The curriculum includes a total of approximately 140 instructional hours.

Membership Course 101 and Maturity Course 201 were described above. Leadership Course 301 is designed to introduce and implement the central principles of reproducing Christian leaders: calling, character, chemistry in the community, and competence. The two core concepts are that every person has the potential to become a leader, and every leader can identify and reproduce another leader.

There are various practical exercises for each participant to be involved. For example: students are actively involved in creating a personal and a ministry budget; how to manage a parish meeting; and participation in team building exercises for problem solving. The biblical basis for this course is from Ephesians 4:12, “to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up,” and 2 Timothy 2:2, “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.”

In summary, the author has outlined in this chapter the actions taken to develop, test, refine, and validate the model for reproducing Eklesia Episkopaly Malagasy leaders.

The actions included incorporating the model in courses taught to students in training for evangelism and ministry, lay leaders, evangelists and clergy. The following chapter will present the outcomes and recommendations for reproducing Christian leaders in the Eklesia Episkopaly Malagasy.

CHAPTER V OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The author's intent in Chapter V is to explain the outcomes of the various methodologies mentioned in Chapter IV. They include the particulars of the interviews regarding the five rites of passage (i.e., birth, initiation, marriage, eldership and burial), the details from training the leaders in southern Madagascar and the results of the student training in Toliara.

The author will analyze these rites of passage in the Malagasy culture, then consider Christian parallels, provide adaptations for an African model, and evaluate connections to evangelism, discipleship, and leadership. And finally, the author will identify those African cultural traditions which are unacceptable to the Christian faith and reject these as not applicable to the proposed model for reproducing Malagasy Christian leaders.

In this chapter, it is the author's intent to conclude and make recommendations pertaining to an African model to reproduce Malagasy Christian Leaders rooted in evangelism, discipleship and leadership. It is imperative that the author evaluate the outcomes within the framework of the original hypothesis: can one use an African model for reproducing Malagasy Christian leaders as a bridge for evangelism, discipleship and leadership?

The Outcomes of the Interviews

Birth Rite

The Malagasy believe the birth of a child is one of the most essential things to produce and contribute in the community. Many local artisans carve wooden images depicting either women pregnant with large breasts or a woman with large breasts nursing her child. These pictures depict the importance of reproducing life and nurturing the newborn. Adding an infant to the family and the extended community begins the new relationship that is vital to those in the family and community. Within the context of the family and community this new relationship will grow stronger and deeper over time and as the person goes through the different stages of the life cycle.

The birth rite is a lengthy process which begins before and ends after the actual rite itself takes place. Mbiti describes this process as beginning before the child is born:

In African societies, the birth of a child is a process which begins long before the child's arrival in this world and continues long thereafter. It is not just a single event which can be recorded on a particular date. Nature brings the child into the world, but society creates the child into a social being, a corporate person. For the community must protect the child, feed it, bring it up, educate it and incorporate it into the wider community.¹

¹ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publications, 1969), 110.

For example, the Masikoro ethnic group supports the idea that the birth rite begins long before the actual rite. It starts with the traditional marriage of the parents with the bride price. One bull is given to the in-laws for the marriage rite, and then a second bull is given to the in-laws once the first child is born, regardless of the child's gender. If the cow is not given at that time to the in-laws, they have the right to take the child from the parents as their own. A third bull is then given to the *Hazomanga* (literally meaning 'blue wood') to be sacrificed to the *razana* (ancestors: the living dead). During the ceremony of the third bull, the bull is killed in a certain way by the *mpisoro* (priest), and then prayers of thanksgiving are offered to the ancestors for the birth of the first born. The prayer concludes with a twist, requesting the ancestors not to come back asking for any further sacrifices. The bull is cooked a certain way and then distributed for consumption according to the status of the people in the community.²

The *Hazomanga* is associated with two things in Masikoro culture. Physically, it is a wooden holy stick taken from the forest which is used for most rites of passage. Second, it refers to the man who is the local priest of the community, not a witchdoctor, but rather one who is responsible for performing, teaching and carrying on the traditions and ceremonies of the culture of the clan.

² Re, interview by author, Toliara, Madagascar, January 14, 2009.

The processes from conception, pregnancy, and birth to naming are all connected to the birth rite. During this process, the Malagasy mother must follow certain practices that are believed to be necessary for her newborn to be born complete, in harmony, and at a state of peace.

From the process of conception to naming of the child, there are many stipulations as to what a woman may or may not do. For example, in the Masikoro culture from southwest Madagascar, a woman may not be allowed to participate in intercourse before and after birth, sometimes up until the child is weaned from the mother. They also may not be allowed to eat certain foods such as fat, beets, cassava and potatoes.³

The Vezo Sara community requires that the pregnant woman return to her parents' house after the third month of pregnancy through six months after birth. Her mother is to provide and take care of her during this period.⁴ This is part of instructing and mentoring that she receives from her mother as she transitions from being a youth to motherhood. In the child's infant years, her mother teaches her how to take care of her child. These early years are significant for the welfare of the child.

There are also certain customs that the husband must follow. It is expected among the Sakalava Menabe that the while a woman is pregnant her husband will give a *sorona*

³ Re, interview by author, Toliara, Madagascar, January 14, 2009.

⁴ Ras, interviewed by author, Ifaty, Madagascar, August 13, 2010.

(offering) - some type of food to his in-laws such as bananas, white small beans, or rice. If not, he has to give a cow after the birth of the child, so that the child belongs to him and not the wife's family. The purpose in giving this offering is to unite the ancestral families and honor God at the same time.⁵

The birth of the new born usually takes place in the home of the couple or her mother's house. The Masikoro and the Vezo Sara have the first child born in the wife's parents' house. Men are forbidden to be present during delivery because they may bring bad omens on the mother or the child and create problems with the next pregnancy.⁶

In some societies, birth consummates a marriage. If there are no children then there is no marriage. Therefore, the first pregnancy is the certification and seal of the marriage. It is seen as an approval and blessing from God.⁷ In contrast, the Masikoro believe that a marriage is legitimate with or without children. "It doesn't matter whether they have a child or not."⁸

One important activity immediately after the birth is the removal of the placenta and cutting of the umbilical cord. This symbolizes the child's attachment to the mother and womanhood. By cutting and removing the cord, he/she symbolizes the separation

⁵ EG, interviewed by author, Ifaty, Madaagscar, January 30, 2010.

⁶ Re, interview by author, Toliara, Madagascar, January 14 2009.

⁷ Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 110.

⁸ Re, interview by author, Toliara, Madagascar, January 14, 2009.

from the mother. However, this is a positive step because it also symbolizes the transference of the child from mother to the local community; the child has begun the incorporation into the community. This separation continues as the child gets older.⁹

Among the Sakalava Menabe, the umbilical cord and placenta are thrown into the ocean transported by dugout canoe. The family does not leave these items to be consumed by animals because they believe if an animal eats them, the animal become mad or insane.¹⁰

Christian Parallels

One significant Christian parallel is the high value attached to new birth in both the African and Christian cultures. For the Christian, new birth occurs through conversion in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Conversion offers a new relationship and new life in Jesus Christ (Romans 6:4). The previous life which did not glorify God through Jesus Christ is abandoned. The new life is based on the person's relationship with Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Through Christ, the convert experiences new peace, complete wholeness and joy.

⁹ Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 113.

¹⁰ EG, interview by author, January 30, 2010.

When an evangelist comes in contact with the non-Christian, he or she emphasizes God's purpose and intentions. In doing so, the role of Jesus and why he came into the world is explained. The person is challenged to turn away from his evil ways and turn towards God through a new relationship with Jesus Christ. The new convert begins to realign himself according to his new relationship with Jesus.

The new convert is also challenged to begin worshipping with a Christian community so that s/he may be encouraged to grow in his or her new faith. The person is challenged to study the bible and to share his new relationship with Jesus with others. New birth is therefore always associated with celebration and integration into the family and community.

Adaptation for Model in Context of Evangelism, Discipleship and Leadership

The model focuses on relationship (see figure 3). Evangelists and other lay Christian leaders making contact with worshippers. All Malagasy believe that God exists, even though He is far away and not able to be approached by the majority of human beings. This is why the Malagasy consult the *mpisoro* and do not approach God directly. If one were to ask if God exists, the Malagasy would think that the question is irrelevant. Of course God exists. Therefore, when the evangelists and lay people make contact with other nominal Christians, non-Christians, and those elders respected in the Malagasy community (spiritual or government), it is with the intent of sharing the Gospel and seeking their permission, support, and blessing to share the Gospel in their community. If

permission is not granted, then the author and his colleagues will not plan an evangelistic mission. Through experience, if the elders do not allow and support the mission, it will not be successful.

When they go into communities, evangelists and lay leaders develop relationships focusing on new life, new birth, and new identity through the convert's belief in Jesus Christ. All of the people including the leaders of the community are invited to receive (*mandray*) Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and to begin a new relationship. The evangelists and lay leaders will visit homes to discuss Jesus with the family members. The family as a whole then will decide or not decide to be converted to Jesus Christ. Very seldom will one find individuals accepting Christ but rather groups, families, communities which are based on their relationships with one another. Decisions are based on their position and relationships with one another rather than on what one thinks is best for himself but for the community.

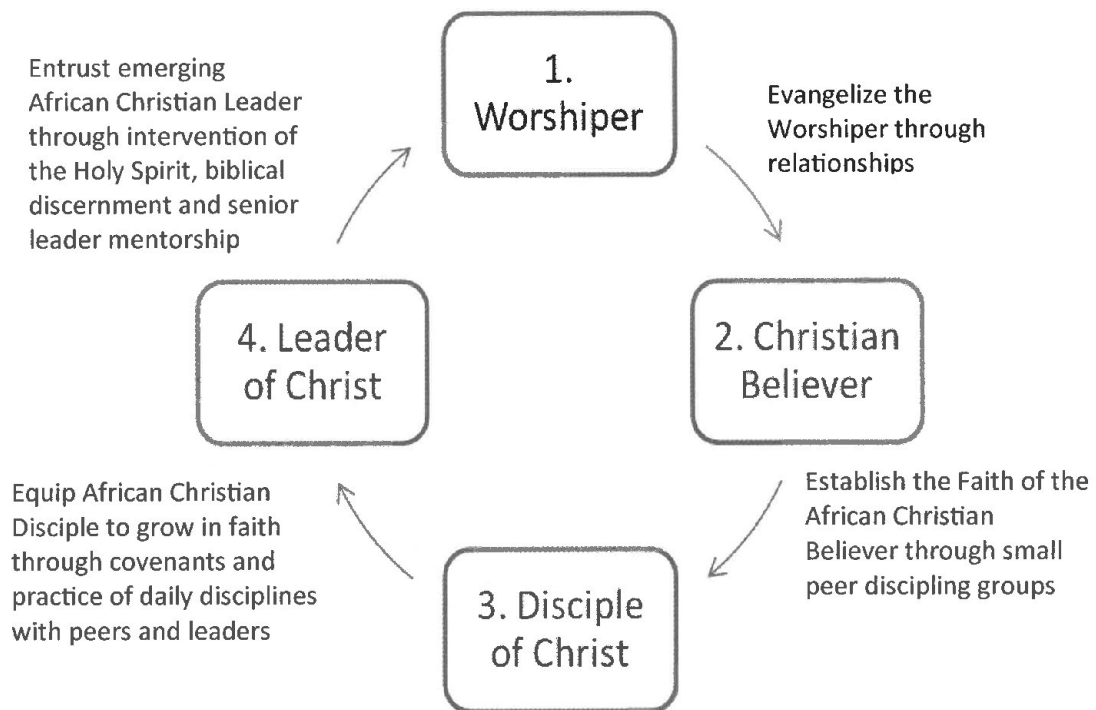


Figure 3. The African Model for Reproducing Malagasy Christian Leaders

Level	Matthew 28:18-19	Question	African Model Themes	Bible Verse	Covenantal Action
1. Worshiper	Evangelize the Worshiper <i>"while going"</i>	How do Christians bring an African worshiper to believe in Christ?	Through conversion and evangelism in the context of relationships: To those in the church To those outside the church	Matthew 28:16-20	Confess Repent Believe
2. A Christian Believer	Establish the Faith of the African Christian Believer <i>"teaching"</i>	How do Christians establish the faith of the new believer to become a discipler?	Through small peer discipling groups and instructed living in Christian community: In this context the central doctrines of the faith are discussed and accepted.	Hebrews 6:1-3 The Creeds: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit and the Church Course: Planting 101	Sign Covenant Be Baptized
3. A Disciple of Christ	Equip the African Christian Discipler <i>"Obedience/obey"</i>	How to equip the discipler to grow in faith to become an emerging African leader?	Through covenants with leaders and peers to practice the six disciplines of: daily devotions, giving, obedience, fasting, evangelism, and discipleship.	Ephesians 4:12 Acts 2:42 Course: Growing 201	Sign Covenant and Become Confirmed
4. A Leader of Christ	Entrust African Christian Leader <i>"Jesus commissioned disciples"</i>	How to entrust the minister to be an African Christian leader?	Through intervention of the Holy Spirit in communal living over one year with more, as needed. Through intensive biblical discernment, closely monitored mentoring with trusted senior leaders (elders), and experiential internships with small communities.	Ephesians 4:1 The emerging leader begins to implement the four C's: Calling, Character, Chemistry and Competence. Course: Harvesting 301	Sign Covenant Commission New Leader

Figure 4. The African Model for Reproducing Malagasy Christian Leaders (in detail)

Once one comes to faith in his or her relationship with Jesus Christ, the discipleship activities begin for the new believer. Just as the grandmother disciplines her daughter on how to be a mother, how to take care of and disciple her newborn daughter or son, so does the Christian mother or father begin to act as a spiritual mother and spiritual father to the new born Christian. Biological parents need to see themselves as spiritual parents to their children. A mother and father need to be intentional about being spiritual parents to their children. They teach their children the foundations of the faith and how to grow in their faith. This needs to be communicated not only by word but also by deed.

Not only are people to be spiritual parents to their biological children but also to others who have just come to faith. Those who come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are integrated into a discipling group where a spiritual parent disciplines two or three persons of the same gender for two to three years. Spiritual mothers and fathers are expected to disciple their spiritual children in terms of studying the scriptures together, ministering together, and praying together. This is all done in the context of a relationship in which the spiritual parent pours his or her life into the spiritual daughter or son. Therefore, time, energy and close proximity are all key factors to the success of this relationship. The intended outcome and success of this discipleship is that new converts will eventually become spiritual grandmothers and grandfathers. Then the multiplication of disciples has become successful.

Malagasy Traditions and Meanings Which Are Rejected

One significant issue concerning conversion is that the Malagasy person needs to be willing to turn away from evil, including Malagasy traditional beliefs and practices that would undermine the person's belief in and complete surrender to Jesus Christ. For example, after conversion, some Malagasy may continue the customs of the community by visiting an *ombiasa* (witchdoctor) for healing, for requesting blessing for his child to pass the Malagasy national exam, for consultation on when is the best day to have a circumcision, and/or for advice on what to do to place a curse on someone. This practice is unacceptable. Jesus has become the only mediator between God and man. One is to seek healing from God directly through Jesus Christ. Blessings come from God the Father, God the son and God the Holy Spirit. The new convert needs to become deeply involved in the local Christian community beginning with Membership Course 101 setting the foundations of what one believes as a Christian.

The person is to repent of the old practices which separated him or her from God. The convert is to turn away from previous practices which did not recognize Jesus as the only mediator. A new convert must forsake all practices and customs that substitute someone else in the role of Jesus Christ.

As mentioned above, conversion is common in groups. The downside of such conversions is that everyone agrees to conversion, but everyone may not be committed at the same level. Even though there are some sincere and genuine conversions, there may

be others who are doing it out of loyalty and respect to their family and friends but have no intention of following through with a committed relationship with Jesus Christ. This does not mean that one is to stop groups of people from coming to faith, but rather that one must spend time with the group to help each person grow spiritually. Leaders must also form and mentor small groups of new converts.

Naming Rite

In the naming rite, the newborn will be given a name that is connected and identified with a specific meaning. His or her name may be identified with a benevolent ancestor, relative or a special person. For example, the author was renovating a building, to be used as a dispensary in Ramainandro, in order to provide professional services, medicines and family planning programs for those in the local community. One of the local elders was so moved and influenced by the author because of his character and deeds that the elder decided to name his first child after the author and call him Tody.

The importance of the naming of a child after a father, mother, grandfather, grandmother or an ancestor is very significant. It ensures that the names of the ancestors remain and continue within the community. This makes it clearer to those in the community to whom the individual belongs. It also reinforces the genealogy of the families and the significance of retelling the stories and customs from one generation to the next. By following this rite, family members are connected with their ancestors.

A person's character and deeds are important to the family and to the community. Therefore, his or her personality and character need to be remembered; to accomplish this, a newborn is named after him or her. It is hoped that the child named after the ancestor will display the same characteristics of the honored person. This allows the lineage of the family to continue through the newborn and the memories of that respected and revered ancestor to continue in the community. Lastly, the name can be connected when traveling. The name allows the traveler to connect with other relatives so that he or she is not alone when on journey. For example, when the person travels, he or she will make contact with family and extended family if they know of any relatives in the area in which he is traveling. The family name provides a means of hospitality and security for the traveler. If he or she doesn't know of family members in the area, once the traveler arrives, he or she will begin to ask around if there are any family members nearby.¹¹

Others may be named after a situation or event. For example, *Nolavy* (literally means refused or rejected) was named as a result of her father having an affair. The mother was so upset at her husband's actions that she named her child *Nolavy* as a reminder to her husband.¹² Other examples include *Valo* (literally eight), who was given this name because he was the eighth child in the family. *Fara* (the last one) was given this name because she was the last child born in the family. There are many other

¹¹ Ras, interviewed by author, Ifaty, Madagascar, August 13, 2010.

¹² Re, interviewed by author, Toliara, Madagascar, January 14, 2009.

examples like these. One thing is clear: in this tradition, the naming of a person points to an identity beyond him or herself. The name provides a connection to the past, present and future.

The Vezo Sara would agree that the continual lineage of the ancestors is very important. But the parents also believe that some additional reasons to have children are for the children to take care of them when they become old, provide food for them, and provide a proper burial for them when they die.¹³

Christian Parallels

One significant parallel between the ATR naming rite and Christian tradition is Christian baptism. In many Christian traditions, such as the Anglican tradition, it is common practice during baptism to be given a new name. This is why people will sometimes ask what is one's baptismal name or Christian name. The new name identifies the new convert with his or her new identity with Christ. The new Malagasy converts take on a biblical name such as *Jaona* (John), *Davida* (David), *Theo* (Theopolis), Elisabeth (Elizabeth), or Estera (Esther), or a saint's name such as Remi or Patrice (Patrick). However, they have also taken on western names that they assumed were Christian, only later to find out that they weren't. These new names connect new converts

¹³ Ras, interviewed by author, Ifaty, Madagascar, August 13, 2010.

with the past biblical and/or Christian men and women of God, with their present Christian life, and with their Christian life in the future.

The naming rite has a specific connection in terms of the new relationship in Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit. In the Episcopal Church services in Southern Madagascar, when the priest anoints the newly baptized, he says you are sealed as Christ's own forever, referring to Ephesians 1:13.¹⁴ At baptism, Christians affirm their relationship and commitment to Jesus as Lord and Savior. They also affirm their Christian faith in the creed, acknowledge their new relationship within the new Christian family, and renounce evil.

Adaptations

The naming of the person at baptism connects the person to the Christian faith and the Christian community; the new believer is linked and identified with the communion of saints past, present and future. The new name is a constant reminder that the individual is to strive to reflect and exhibit the characteristics of a saint. The sainthood of believers crosses ethnic boundaries, races, and genders.

The white marks placed on boys prior to circumcision signify an identification and recognition of membership into the ethnic group. This is an outward marking

¹⁴ *Prayer Book and Hymnal* (New York, NY: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1986), 308.

signifying a covenant between the boys and the community. A similar connection is made when people come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Some traditions use oil (Chrism) to mark the sign of the cross on the forehead of the baptized towards the end of the sacrament. This is a visible mark of an invisible inward grace that Christ has marked the newly baptized as his own forever.

The images of new birth, new life, and good news permeate the local Malagasy community and family. Some people are informed about the pregnancy, but generally discretely. Once the baby is born, then it becomes official and news is broadcast throughout the community. There is no Malagasy public rite of passage for birth among the Vezo Sara and Sakalava Menabe and no gifts are exchanged. But the Masikoro have a huge feast and gifts are given. It is expected that friends and family will visit the family; the men will bring guns and shoot them off into the air to announce the birth, while others will give some gifts or money to the father and mother of the newly born. The announcement of the birth and its proclamation to the community is reminiscent of the good news of Jesus' birth being proclaimed by the heavenly host. It is important to allow Christian converts, their families, and their communities the opportunity to announce and celebrate their new birth.

The naming rite also gives a sense of identity when people travel. It allows them to connect with other relatives and community members. The idea is that they are never alone. This also provides an avenue for people to host or offer hospitality to others as a result of their birth/naming rite. Hospitality then becomes a form of evangelism. The acts

of generosity, kindness, and service remind travelers of Jesus' invitation: "come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

The discipling (in Membership class 101) of new converts and their colleagues begins following their conversion. They are trained by a mentor in a small group (2-3 people) or by an evangelist in a group of 10-12. The Christian "infants" are taught the foundations of the faith with a focus on the doctrine of the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit and the church. The new converts are given a relational generic name called *ry havana* (the brethren or brothers or sisters), implying they are part of the communion of saints and will study Membership Course 101 together.

The Malagasy have integrated certain levels of discipleship in this rite. Among the Vezo Sara, the training of the pregnant women is imperative, especially for the first born. The new mother spends one year with her mother, under her protection, direction, care, planning and nurturing for the new additional family member. It is during this time that the grandmother teaches and instructs her daughter on how to take care of herself and the baby. It is clear during this time that the grandmother discipless the mother, who then in turn begins to disciple the newborn child. Similarly, the idea of spiritual mothers and fathers training and mentoring spiritual daughters and sons is very important in the *ry havana*. It is in this context that new converts are able to begin to grow under the guidance of a mature woman or man under God.

Rejections of Malagasy Customs/Meanings

One of the important issues for the new Christian is the clear alliances he or she has made with Jesus Christ and with the Christian community. Malagasy converts to Christianity must accept that they have only one ancestor (Jesus Christ) as the mediator between God and man. As is written in 1 Timothy 2:5, "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ, who gave himself as a ransom for all men." Therefore, Christians reject the role of the ancestors as the ones that mediate between God and man.

The author had the opportunity to travel to a historical site, the King's summer palace, a number of years ago. After visiting the palace and learning about how Christians were martyred by being thrown off the cliffs if they did not make a blood covenant with the community and the ancestors, the author and others started to head towards their vehicle. The author noticed a bull tied to a large sacred tree. After inquiring why the animal was tied to the tree, he was informed that there was going to be a sacrifice made that day. So the author waited for the people to gather. The elders, untied the bull, turned its neck, and cut its throat. Immediately one of the elders collected the blood that was gushing out of the throat. Within minutes elders and others began drinking and sharing the blood from the sacrificed animal. The open air service continued with holy water being tossed on the ground. Then the elders prayed. First, they prayed to God, then they prayed to their ancestors and then finally to Jesus Christ requesting that this sacrifice be acceptable to all of them.

The new convert may see no harm in continuing to pray, consult or offer sacrifices to the ancestors to appease them as part of the traditional custom. This form of syncretism must be rejected because their continued sacrifices imply that Jesus' sacrifice was not good, sufficient or eternal for all people at all times. It also implies that Jesus is just like one of the other ancestors, one of many without any distinctions. The book of Hebrews 7:27 says that Jesus' sacrifice was once and for all, "Unlike other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all he offered himself" and again in Hebrews 10:10, "we have been holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

Malagasy converts to Christianity also must recognize that their relationship with the ancestors is secondary to their relationship with God. God is not distant and separated from his creation. He created humanity in his image and to be in relationship with them. Even though it is believed that the ancestors still live in the community and are actively involved for good or bad, it does not compare to the authority and power which has been given to Christ Jesus. The ancestors have no power or authority over Jesus Christ.

Initiation Rite

Another very important rite of passage in the African Traditional Religion cycle of life is the initiation. Through this rite, the child or youth advances to an adult status in the community. In southern Madagascar, the author wasn't able to detect any ethnic

group that had an existing initiation rite. The Masikoro, Sakalava Menabe, and Vezo Sara do not have any rites to mark the passage into adulthood. When I asked the three interviewees if there was an initiation rite in their culture, they all seemed confused by the question. The concept clearly was very foreign to them. When I gave them a few examples from Kenya regarding adults having their teeth pulled out or circumcision, they still seemed confused. Nevertheless, they were eager to discuss the Malagasy custom of infant/child circumcision and its significance in the community.

Circumcision (*savatse* in Malagasy Masikoro) is very important in Masikoro and Sakalava Menabe communities because it signifies the child is a man,¹⁵ but not that a child has become an adult. Similarly but yet different, the Sakalava Menabe, the *savatse* symbolizes the child becoming a male.¹⁶ The Malagasy understand this rite less as an initiation rite to adulthood and more as incorporation into manhood or manness. This event may be understood more in terms of a rite that signifies identity with one's gender rather than in terms of achieving adult status.

In general, Malagasy boys are circumcised at a young age. The Masikoro community follows a very specific process of circumcision, including an expectation that circumcision must be completed within the first year of life. The first step for the father

¹⁵ Re, interview by author, Toliara, Madagascar, January 14, 2009.

¹⁶ EG, interviewed by author, Morondava, Madagascar, January 30, 2010.

(if he has a son) among the Masikoro is to talk to his grandparents, parents, and then the elders (people older than him) in his clan or family. The elders will then determine who else in the community has a son who needs to be circumcised so there can be a community gathering. One practical reason as to why the Masikoro circumcise boys in groups before they can walk is that once a boy is mobile, the healing of the wound will take longer. Another reason is that it is more economical for circumcision to be done for boys in several families so that expenses (the purchase of the bull) could be shared.¹⁷

The father of the circumcised child is responsible for managing the celebrations. He must contact his father in-law and invite him to the ceremony. The father in-law then brings the son in-law a bull as gift. The father in-law is required by tradition to give the boy's father a bull for the circumcision of his grandson, but is not allowed to bring the bull into the village. He waits nearby.

The son in-law and his friends go to greet the father in-law, shooting their guns into the air until they reach the father in-law. When they finally meet, there is a special request by the son in-law to come with him. The father in-law accepts and they all go back to the original village, again shooting into the air. While going back, they put money on the bull's horns tied with a piece of rope. If the mother of the child being circumcised comes along, she will receive a long stick extended into the air where relatives put

¹⁷ Re, interviewed by author Toliara, Madagascar, February 9, 2009.

money. A lot of money may be gathered. The bull is then taken to the home of the son-in-law. The child's mother sits on the ground and lays a mat in front of her. All the girls from her side of the family will bring her gifts of money. The father and the men do the same.

During the ceremony, the *mpisoro* and *ombiasa* participate in the rituals and ceremonies. One *ombiasa* is there to prevent the *hazomanga* and the children from dying when they touch the head of the bull. The children do this in order to beg for their lives from the ancestors and God. It is common to have more than one *ombiasa* in a village and at times they may be very competitive for business. Sometimes this may lead to one casting evil spells on the other while the other is working at a ceremony. One *ombiasa* is always present to protect the *mpisoro* and others to protect the different children during this festive occasion.

It is common practice for the parents of the Masikoro to bring their child to the *ombiasa* (witchdoctor) and *mpisoro* (priest). The *ombiasa* gives the fathers water to wash the infants' bodies. Then the *mpisoro* goes to the *hazomanga* (the holy blue stick). He prays, calling out to the ancestors (*razana*) as if they are deity, "to protect and bless your grandchildren. Here is a bull for you. Don't ask anymore until next year." The parents who are having their children circumcised are to present a large male bull to be sacrificed. The holy pot and *hazomanga* stick are all present. The child's uncle from the mother's side is to put the children on his shoulders. The uncle carries a spear and dances around the bull. He encourages the child on his shoulders to touch the head of the bull,

which is tied up with the head of the bull facing west to pray to the ancestors. Any children who touch the bull and then urinate or have a bowel movement are said to be cursed.

After the sacrifice of the bull, the community eats it with the *ombiasa* eating the head and one part of the rib. The piece connected to the tail (buttocks) belongs to the *mpisoro* (priest). The *mpisoro* then pours blood on the *hazomanga* (the blue stick) to make it holy and then on the ground for the ancestors.¹⁸ It is now time to perform the circumcision on the children. A professional does the cutting. The foreskin is thrown into the river where the father's side of the family resides; it is said that the spirits live in the river.

This rite of passage is very significant for each Sakalava Menabe because each new male is given a *katraki*. A *katraki* symbolizes authority and reproduction for the male child who will become the head and leader of his family.¹⁹ Each male in the clan must have a *katraki*. The *katraki* looks like a spear which represents the male organ.

The Antambahoaka ethnic group (Southeastern Madagascar) has a unique *sambatra* (circumcision) rite of passage that happens once every seven years for all the young boys who have not yet been circumcised:

¹⁸ Re, interviewed by author, Toliara, Madagascar, February 12, 2009.

¹⁹ EG, interviewed by author, Morondava, Madagascar, January 30, 2010.

This major moment in their lives is not just the ritual of the collective circumcision of the boys born in the seven years preceding it but is also an initiation and integration rite practiced by the Antambahoaka boy that will permit him to make the passage from an asexual state to the state of male.²⁰

From that moment on, the newly circumcised will be integrated into the paternal clan and initiated into the life of the true Antambahoaka man. He will become a Zafiraminia, a son of Raminia, the founding ancestor of this ethnic group.

However, for this to happen, he must symbolically relive for one month the history of the great exodus of his ancestors (Raminina) to Madagascar. During this month, one week is set aside as holy week. During holy week, certain significant events take place. On Monday, the women delegated by the mothers of the children to be circumcised go off to a *tsiatoro* (secret) place to simulate gathering the *raffia* for the new mats that cover the floors of the different *trano be* (big houses). They return from this gathering towards eleven in the morning in processions, waving raffia in their hands, all the while beating out their march with chants and cries. The women take breaks during which they sit down to regulate the order of arrival of each procession to the different *trano be*.

²⁰ Jacques Bock, "*The Sambatra : The Collective Circumcision Rite of the Antambahoaka*," <http://www.lightmediation.net/blog/podcast/2008/april/sambatra.pdf> (accessed March 1, 2010).

On Wednesday of the holy week, uncles of the circumcised children and their in-laws leave very early in the morning to gather stalks of wild cardamon that will serve as part of the celebrations near the *trano be*. A large battle and fight takes place between the returning uncles and the fathers of the circumcised boys. The former launch an attack on the *trano be* in successive waves. These battles are not simply enactments; they are very violent and always ritually finish with a victory for the assailants (uncles). Some take advantage of these dangerous battles to settle personal scores with those towards whom they have animosity.

The last day of the holy week of the *sambatra*, Friday, is the most important. All the Antambahoaka clans get ready for the large lengthy procession, the *Magnenatra* (the exodus of Raminia) towards the mouth of the Mananjary River. All the clans, organized like armies, process to the beach of Mananjary with the clan's oldest branch leading the way.

Symbolizing the descendants of the founding King Raminia, the boys to be circumcised each wear a robe and a red hat (ethnic group's royal color) with white stripes. This long march symbolizes the suffering endured by Raminia during his exodus. Long pauses are imposed by the *Loharangitra*, the general of each army. It is the rest period during the exodus. The return to the various *trano be* is by a route different from that of the procession. They are admitted into the *trano be* by the western door: the exit is by the eastern door. White earth is put on the boy's foreheads and behind the ears. Thus,

each boy to be circumcised (after sunset) has been definitively recognized by the clan as one of its children. They are the descendants of the founding King Raminia.

The children, most of whom are panic-stricken, struggle to prevent an adult from grabbing them in order to force them to sit on the decapitated bull's head for the circumcision. The children are neither conscious of nor know that the moment they are about to live is only symbolic, which makes these scenes particularly emotional. Once the circumcision is carried out by a doctor in his white coat, the child is handed over to his father by the eastern door of the *trano be* and goes back to his hut.²¹

In summary of the Malagasy rite of initiation, the author found no evidence of a formal separate rite of initiation in southern Madagascar which transitions a youth to adulthood. The interviewees led the author to believe that there are no Malagasy initiation rites throughout the island. When pressed further, the Masikoro priest said maybe the Tandroy had it at one time. The Vezo Sara priest suggested that the marriage rite was also the initiation into adulthood. When the author rephrased the question, how does one becomes an adult? The Vezo Sara priest responded by saying “when one starts working or gets married.”²²

²¹Bock, “*The Sambatra*” (accessed March 1, 2010).

²²Ras, interviewed by author, Ifaty, Madagascar, August 13, 2010.

However, in mainland Africa, where the majority of the initiation rites are apparent and evident in the communities, these initiation rites include seclusion of the candidates for instruction and training regarding what it means to be an adult. The children are taught about adulthood and the new responsibilities they will have in the community (protection, marriage, reproduction, values and taboos in the community). The teaching takes place in the context of relationships. Children are taught as a unit, as a peer group, as blood brothers who will see themselves as one family for life. Despite the boys' differences in age, i.e., whether 13 or 28 years old, when they are circumcised, they see each other as being the same age, having the same peer group, and having the same responsibilities and duties in the community. This will remain the same as they grow old together.

This practice is very common among the Samburu and Rendille in Northern Kenya. The most significant part of the initiation rite is circumcision which happens once every 15 years (one generation). In 2007, the author visited Northern Kenya to dedicate a dormitory for girls. The local community was instructing the boys for initiation into adulthood. As a result, a separate temporary village was set up for the young boys, ages 12-25, for a three to six month period of instruction. During this ritual a boy goes through

physical, emotional and psychological changes which take him from childhood to adulthood.²³

The elders in the community, the local priest, and others instruct, disciple and mentor the boys so that they will become adults. The boys are asked to leave behind childish behaviors in order to become a man. Certain actions demonstrate whether the person is a man. The peer group keeps everyone accountable. The Elders observe the boys' words and actions for signs of maturity and as potential future leaders.

The incorporation period into adulthood for Samburu and Rendille youth takes place on the day the boys come to be circumcised. They are no longer children after this event. They are now men regardless of their age. In modern times they are encouraged to come with their own sharp knife while the professional expert prepares to cut the foreskin. This is done very early in the morning. Some of the young boys may go into a cold river (if there is a river) beforehand to help numb the penis and then return for the circumcision. During the operation, the new young adults are encouraged to show no pain. If they do show pain, they will be labeled a coward for the rest of their lives among their own age group. This would have a significant impact on their future, preventing them from become an elder in the community.

²³ John S. Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publications, 1975), 96.

After circumcision, the new adult is fully incorporated into the community. He has now become a young adult with additional and greater responsibility for the welfare of the family and community, such as protecting the community and having the opportunity to marry.

In many African traditions, one is still considered a child until he has been circumcised, regardless of his age. But circumcision is not the only initiation rite of passage. Pulling out of the front teeth is another. One example, the Luo, people of Western Kenya who are fishermen, follow this custom. They are not circumcised, but instead their initiation rite is the pulling out of four or six front teeth. Because of the diversity of cultural customs, some other tribes, such as the Kikuyu, look with disfavor on them and consider them to still be children because they have not had the proper initiation rite of being circumcised.

Christian Parallels

There are a few links between this rite of initiation and the Christian rite of confirmation. Teenage boys/girls and adults gather together in order to prepare and study for confirmation. In Madagascar the instruction for confirmation is extensive and taken seriously. Instruction will take 6 months to a year and includes learning the local catechism, the Lord's prayer, the Nicene Creed, the Ten Commandments, and a few other things. At the end of the catechism training, they then prepare for the confirmation service, during which the candidates reaffirm the vows made at their baptism. They

denounce evil and all of its works and forces and affirm their faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior. The bishop then lays his hands on their heads and anoints the confirmands on the forehead while praying for them. Each confirmand is then encouraged and commissioned by the bishop to partner with him to do the works of service in the church and in the community. From that point on, the confirmand is allowed to receive communion and become full participants in the church and the sacraments. They are also allowed to serve on boards and committees.

Adaptations

There are a few adaptations of African rites that prove very useful even though the Malagasy do not have an initiation rite. In terms of discipleship, the emphasis on instructional training in the context of relational community is an imperative aspect of the Model. The newly baptized, those who have identified and connected themselves with Christ, have just finished Membership Course 101 in which they have been taught about their new relationship in Christ, turning away from the past, and turning towards God through Jesus Christ. Then the following questions are answered: Who is Jesus Christ? Why did he come to earth? Why did he die? Who is the Holy Spirit? What does the Holy Spirit do? Who is the church? And what does the church do? Once the students have completed the training and passed the exam, they are encouraged to continue to the next level of training which prepares them for confirmation. These students are asked to study and participate in Maturity Class 201. This course allows disciples to go deeper in their faith and to participate in their own spiritual growth.

The model also focuses on instructional relationship building; disciples are asked how they can grow and mature as disciples together. They are taught six disciplines which they are expected to know individually, but participate in corporately, including having a regular devotional time, giving of their time and tithe, being obedient to Jesus, fasting, evangelizing, and discipling another person. All students are expected to learn all six disciplines while in a relationship with their peers.

Underlying this aspect of the model John Mbiti understands that, “I am because we are.”²⁴ The Disciples’ growth while completing Maturity class 201 is not dependent upon one’s self but rather dependent upon their new spiritual family. Their Christian family is based on their new faith in Christ, their baptism in the name of the Trinity within the new Christian community, and their confirmation of continual growth together. Their existence is and continual existence occurs within the context of community relationships and not alone.

For example, in implementing a discipline, the students learn how to have a daily devotional time; however, unlike western Christians who focus on individual quiet time, all the African students gather together each morning at 6:00 a.m. to have devotions in their local church in the presence of others. Thus, they are able to honor their own culture by doing things together and holding each other accountable. In Malagasy culture, if one

²⁴ Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 108.

does something alone it is seen as an offense, or that the person has a serious problem, or that the person is hiding something. Others would say that the person is crazy. Therefore, having quiet time by one's self would be culturally offensive. However, an assumption concerning the community devotion time is that it is quiet. It is left up to the individual if he wants his time to be quiet or not. Some people like to speak to God quietly while others want to be more verbal when having a conversation with God. But one thing is for sure: they are having and spending time with God together.

During the implementation and living out of these disciplines, the students who don't necessarily know each other are encouraged to come together as a new community designed for the purpose of establishing, equipping and being empowered. These students are instructed and expected to be living and demonstrating these six disciplines successfully half way through this one year. They form a new nucleus where they are equal and hold each other spiritually responsible in a peer group. The rest of their lives, they will be seen as Christian brothers (*havana*) and sisters who are equally baptized, equally confirmed and equally commissioned as leaders.

The other significant aspect of African rites that can be adapted is the role of spiritual fathers and mothers (elders). Spiritual parents train and equip students to be authentic life-long disciples by example. The spiritual fathers and mothers are asked to invest and pour their lives into the lives of a few disciples for two or three years. Students will be taught Membership Course 101 (what Christians believe), Maturity Course 201 (practical part on how to grow in one's faith) and Leadership Course 301 (how to choose

a leader and how to lead) under the care of the spiritual mother or father. It is in that context that the values of faithfulness, trustworthiness, availability, loyalty, responsibility, commitment, transparency, obedience, and community are taught and lived out.

An additional adaptation brought from African rites to the model is that spiritual fathers disciple spiritual sons and spiritual mothers disciple spiritual daughters. Being disciplined by an adult of the same gender is important because of the level of depth, intimacy and confidentiality required. In the same way, the process of Christian discipleship occurs in small groups of the same gender; group members study the scriptures, pray, have fellowship, and encourage each other in their faith journey. It is the responsibility of the spiritual father or mother to make sure that the spiritual child is trustworthy, faithful, and accountable to the Lord and to the group.

This rite of passage introduces candidates for confirmation to the practices required to become full-fledged members of the Christian community. Those responsible for their discipling and instruction take seriously the identification, development and observation of potential future leaders. The bishop, clergy, and evangelists along with the spiritual fathers and mothers are the ones who are observing and evaluating the candidates for confirmation based on their calling, character, chemistry in community and competence. During their extensive preparation, church leaders and students' mentors are able to perceive which disciples have the greatest potential for leadership according to what they believe, what they do, and how they do it.

Rejections

In African culture, some rites, including initiation rites, are gender-specific. For example, in Madagascar only males are circumcised. In traditional Malagasy custom only males become leaders. Women are forbidden to become leaders in the community. However, in Christianity, when it comes to initiation rites such as confirmation, it is not gender-specific nor exclusive to one gender. All people, both men and women, are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). Therefore, males and females have equal access to God regardless of their gender, race, color, or ability. Galatians 3:27 states, "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have been clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Therefore when the time comes for a Christian rite to be performed, males and females are baptized together and males and females are confirmed together. There is no gender distinction for the Christian during baptism and/or initiation rites. All participate together equally. The only exception is connected to the peer group for the training of candidates. They train according to gender. Men are asked to be trained by godly men and women by godly women. Yet all will be brought together for baptism and confirmation rites.

Another important point is that Christians reject the tradition that the body must be altered physically as a component of the initiation rite. Christians recognize that their bodies are the temple of God (1 Corinthians 6:19); therefore, nothing need be done physically to enhance their relationship with God or as a means for salvation. The first

synod in Jerusalem dealt with this same issue: “unless you are circumcised according to the custom taught by Moses you cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1). The apostles and the elders decided that it was through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that they were saved and not through an outward physical sign, such as circumcision (Acts 15:11).

Marriage Rite

The marriage rite of passage establishes a change from one status – being single – to another – being a married couple. With marriage both males and females are granted a new standing or position in the community as fully participating adults. Community members see the newly married couple as having new and additional responsibilities in their newly formed family as well as in the local community. The Malagasy understand this rite in terms of covenants. Covenantal agreements are made that unite the two families and the families’ ancestors, continue the genealogy of the family, and fulfill the customs of the ancestors.

In the Malagasy culture, the marriage process begins with courtship and continues with covenants made between the two families. The husband makes a covenant with the father-in-law, brothers and brothers-in-law. These covenants have binding impact and influence. In-laws are now seen as family. What is mine is yours and what is yours is mine.

Each ethnic group has specific customs and actions associated with the marriage rite. The Masikoro man must not talk to his future father in-law directly but rather talks to the mother and tells her he loves her daughter and wants to marry her. "Can you give her to me?" The mother then talks to the father. "Someone has asked for your daughter and wants to marry her. Do you allow it?" She then tells the father who the man is. If he says yes, then the mother will give the answer to the man.

The man then will go with his father and other elders from his family to visit his future in-laws to officially request the hand of the woman in marriage. His mother is not allowed to attend or participate in this gathering. They bring gifts such as drinks (possibly alcohol) for the in-laws and their relatives. Then a covenant negotiation begins that may take hours to finish.

The negotiation initially focuses on the future wife. The potential bride is spoken of as a banana tree or a seed. "We have come here to ask for a banana tree to plant in my garden" or "We have come here to ask for a seed (*tabiry*) to plant in my garden" (also the same tradition for the Vezo Sara).²⁵ The father of the potential bride might say "How do you know my banana tree or seed may grow well or bear fruit in your garden?" The father may be difficult at first, in order that the potential son-in-law may prove himself worthy of the father's daughter. Or he may not approve of this either because of the

²⁵ Ras, interviewed by author, Ifaty, Madagascar, August 13, 2010.

man's or his family's character. The discussion is very serious, but generally eases as it continues.

There are some similarities among the Sakalava Menabe; however, the man is not allowed to talk to the parents of the potential wife. The first visit is by the brother(s) of the man to the parents (called the *fioboha/takomaso*, which means 'blind folded'). The brother(s) talk with the potential in-laws about the good intentions of the man. If the parents accept the offer, the woman will also need to accept.²⁶

The next step of the covenant among the Masikoro tradition includes additional serious questioning by the Masikoro woman's father and relatives concerning the man's genealogy (ancestors). "Who are you a descendant of and from where have you come?" Some tribes are not able to marry into other tribes because of past conflicts, incest issues, or taboos. If they marry, it will be seen as the couple and their families are going against the wishes of the ancestors; the marriage will then bring misfortune and trouble to the couple and their families.²⁷

Both the Masikoro and Vezo Sara elders make final requests as to how the man will treat the woman. They want to make sure that she is trained well and that she learns to respect others, especially men. They also put a clause in the covenant as to the

²⁶ EG, interviewed by author, Morondava, Madagascar, January 30, 2010.

²⁷ Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion*, 107.

acceptable conditions of divorce. “Please teach your new wife how to honor and respect the in-laws and the brothers. Also make sure that our daughter, who is now physically complete and whole, returns complete, without any broken legs or bones, broken arms, or loss of sight.”²⁸ This statement doesn’t say what is acceptable for divorce, but that the woman must return completely unharmed emotionally and physically.

Once again there are similarities among the Sakalava Menabe; they will also ask questions about genealogy and where the family is from. “Where do your ancestors come from? Who are your father and grandfathers?” As a sign of the marriage covenant, a bull is given or money may be substituted for the bull. It is considered a sign of good will for the future husband to give something of monetary value (*vola kely*) to the future father-in-law. It is also expected that the brothers of the man will need to mark their arms with a white chalk stripe as a sign of a covenant with the father-in-law before drinking the alcohol. If the brothers do not mark their arms, the two families will not eat or drink together because this is considered a sign that they do not trust each other.

If the Masikoro father accepts, the man and his male family members/representatives will go back home to conclude the meeting. The same is true for the Sakalava Menabe brothers following the meeting with the future father-in-law. The

²⁸ Author participation in a Masikoro traditional marriage on August 11, 2010.

families will set up a time to meet again for the traditional wedding ceremony. From this point on, the woman and the man can sleep together if they choose.²⁹

At the pre-determined time, the man will return with his whole family to signify the beginning of the traditional wedding. No priest is needed for the Masikoro rite. The bull or money is given. The man's family says, "Here is the bull." The woman's family will respond, "She will not be your wife until you give us a bull." They reply, "So here it is." The Sakalava Menabe and the Vezo Sara believe similarly that a bull or the equivalent in cash must be given as a part of the covenant.

Another part of the covenant between the two families is the visible marking on the chest of the males. The Masikoro and Vezo Sara groups require a special ceremony performed by the groom and his father-in-law, uncles-in-law, and brothers-in-law. Traditionally, a male chicken is killed, and the groom takes its blood (often today substituted with red rum) on the tip of his index finger and makes the sign of a plus (+) on the chest of his new male relatives, saying *hangery* (will defecate) and *hamany* (will urinate). The bride enters the room and is to follow the same procedure, marking the male elders on the chest saying the same words; but she is not permitted to face them. The

²⁹ EG, interview by author, Morondava, Madagascar, January 30, 2010.

groom is now to treat his new relatives as family including, all the implications of that and vice versa.³⁰

The Sakalava Menabe once again exhibit similarities regarding the second gathering, which is the traditional wedding. Members of both families gather together. The man is to bring money instead of a male bull in exchange for the woman. They also drink alcohol and give an offering in the direction of northeast to the ancestors. There is plenty of food, drinks, and prayer for the couple. After the ceremony, the husband is then able to take the bride home to his village. However, before he leaves with his bride, the father in-law will sit down with the man and discuss the importance of honoring and taking good care of his daughter. He will tell the man not to beat her, not to break her arms or legs, nor blind her. "And if you separate and divorce, make sure to bring my child (daughter) back to me as complete as you received her."³¹

After all of the covenants have been fulfilled, there will be dinner among the Masikoro. However, the dinner is simple because the husband's family is still considered guests.³² After this traditional wedding, the new husband will leave without his new bride and return to his own village. Approximately one or two weeks later, the Masikoro

³⁰ African Traditional Religion wedding was attended by author on August 12, 2010 in Ankilifaly, Toliara, Madagascar.

³¹ EG, interviewed by author, Morondava, Madagascar, January 30, 2010.

³² Re, interviewed by author, Toliara, Madagascar, February 12, 2009.

husband will send a woman from his family with an ox cart to pick up his new bride. The bride will bring all the new wedding gifts from her family. With the joining of the bride and groom concluded, the traditional marriage is now complete.

For the Vezo Sara marriage, the groom must wait two months before collecting his bride and all of the household furnishings. During this time the mother teaches her daughter how to be a good wife.

This African rite of passage is viewed as a transition and a merger - the joining together not only of two people, but of their whole families. The married couple is now seen as heirs who will contribute towards the continuation of both the man's and woman's family names and lineage. Marriage, therefore, is viewed as an important rite and personal obligation.

For example in Kenya:

In the Gikuyu community, marriage and its obligations occupy a position of great importance. One of the outstanding features in the Gikuyu system of marriage is the desire of every member of the tribe to build up his own family group, and by this means to extend and prolong his father's clan. This results in the strengthening of the tribe as a whole.³³

³³ Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya* (Nairobi: Kenway Publications, 1978), 163.

Procreation is very important for the newly married. Having many offspring is vital to Malagasy ethnic culture. If a person from another country comes to Madagascar and says s/he only has two children, a Malagasy will ask two things: “Why don’t you have more children?” and “Do you have a male child?”

Through the marriage ceremony, a man acquires sole right to sexual intercourse with the woman or women whom he marries. The contract binds not only the bride and groom but their kinsfolk. It becomes a duty to produce children, and sexual intercourse between a man and his wife or wives are looked upon as an act of production and not merely as the gratification of a bodily desire³⁴

The Malagasy blessing given by the elders when the covenant agreements are completed on the wedding day is that the newly married couple would produce seven boys and seven girls. They take reproduction very seriously.

It should be noted that it has become fairly common in Malagasy practice to have intercourse before marriage. The author took a survey asking 15 single persons (ages 21-30) both men and women including three evangelists if they had had intercourse. Sixty-six per cent (10) said that they had already had intercourse prior to marriage.³⁵ This causes a certain level of conflict and lack of impact between the church’s teachings and the Malagasy tradition. On one hand, the Church speaks against intercourse before

³⁴ Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, 163.

³⁵ Eklesia Episkopayl Malagasy Youth Conference in Toliara was held September 14-17, 2010. The interview took place, September 16, 2010.

marriage, but the culture (certain ethnic groups) encourages it for the purpose of proving fertility (to extend and expand the community).

For example, a man in the *Merina* community (highland people in Madagascar) wants to make sure a woman is fertile before he takes her as his wife. This assurance is manifest in the woman becoming pregnant (proving her fertility) out of wedlock, with the marriage coming immediately after the couple confirms that the prospective wife is pregnant. The author personally knows of a few clergy and evangelists for whom such “shot gun” weddings have occurred. The wedding takes place immediately after confirmation of pregnancy to protect the couple from public disgrace.

Another issue present in Madagascar is the issue of three separate types of weddings: traditional (*fanabadiana*), civil (*soaratra*), and Christian (*mariazy*). These three wedding types are unique and viewed differently by the Malagasy, some being accepted and some not. But it seems clear that the Malagasy follow a specific order for weddings: beginning with the traditional, then followed by the civil, and lastly by the Christian rite. This may subtly reflect a prevailing view of the importance of each type.

The traditional marriage is the most common in Madagascar. Most local communities accept this ceremony/custom (*fomba*). However, in recent times, due to poverty and influence of western culture, the Malagasy are starting to live together without any commitment through marriage. The local customs requiring traditional marriage and abstinence from sexual intercourse before marriage are being ignored and

neglected, particularly in urban areas. Today, if a woman gets pregnant, the man may either leave her or take her as his wife, according to the custom of giving the dowry. Many men living in poverty are not able to afford the dowry and therefore, choose to leave the woman (and the resulting baby) altogether.

The author recently questioned 12 Malagasy women attending a women's conference about their relationships with men.³⁶ Many of them did not understand why the man would not stay with them especially after they had begun intercourse. The author explained the first mistake was to have intercourse, as it is forbidden by God's Word. Second, he said there was no covenant made between the man and woman and their families. If there is no covenant, then there is no rite of passage and commitment for marriage. There is nothing (no family nor community) to keep the people bonded together.

The civil marriage is less popular in Madagascar because the government does not have a general positive attitude about the local custom. This may have to do with former colonial powers, failed promises by the government, multiple past coup d'états, high poverty levels, or a lack of education and medical facilities. This attitude has also led to a general distrust of government requirements and policies. People are normally suspicious of written contracts (*fanekena*) of all types. One other issue impacting the popularity of

³⁶ Eklesia Episkopaly Malagasy Women's Leader's Conference, Victory Hotel, February, 2009.

civil marriage is the local custom that the oldest brother must be married before the other younger brothers can marry. As a result of these many factors, few Malagasy will seek a civil marriage.

Although the Christian marriage is the first priority according to the Anglican Canons, the Christian marriage is the last to be completed in the Malagasy culture. Because it requires a civil marriage first, it is the least popular. For the majority of the Malagasy people, the religious marriage is too expensive because it requires new clothes (wedding dress and suit), rings, cake, rental of reception hall and dinner for the whole local community which could cost as much as five years' salary. As stated above, the local custom of not being able to have a church wedding if the older brother has not yet had one also prevents people from having a church wedding. This creates a problem in the Eklesia Episkopaly Malagasy.

The purposes for the marriage rite of passage are numerous. The first is to continue the hereditary line, prove fertility and incur a blessing from the ancestors.³⁷ This may explain why the Masikoro elders give their blessings to the couple saying, "May God bless you with seven daughters and seven sons" while the Vezo Sara elders say "May God bless you with eight daughters and eight sons." Second, this rite establishes relationships between two families and not just two people. This explains why the

³⁷ Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, 163.

wedding ceremony is such a big celebration.³⁸ The third purpose is to meet a requirement of becoming an elder in the community (among the Masikoro one must be married to become an elder). Fourth, marriage will prove how well one is able to manage and administrator the family (among the Luo ethnic group). The fifth purpose is to follow the traditions of the ancestors and make them happy.³⁹

Christian Parallels

Central to the Christian marriage rite is the focus on covenants. During the Christian rite of marriage there are three covenants made. The first covenant central to the Christian is between the couple and God. The couple, the community and the minister gather in the church and petition God through prayers to bless the couple with children, wealth and happiness. The couple agrees to remain faithful to the Lord. A second covenant is made between the husband and the wife as they take vows of mutual love, care and respect. Husband and wife promise to cherish and to love one another, mutually submit to one another, and to become one. As a physical sign of their covenant, they exchange rings. Finally, they make a covenant between themselves and the Christian community (family). The Christian family agrees to uphold them. This is done in the

³⁸ John S. Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion* (Nairobi: East African Educational publications, 1975), 108.

³⁹ Ras, interviewed by author, Ifaty, Madagascar, August 13, 2010.

church and in the context and presence of the Christian community. However, this covenant is usually lacking in most western Christian circles.

The covenant with God is vital to the success, commitment and longevity of the couple. As a result of that covenant the other two are lived out in respect to the spouse and community. If the covenant with God is not healthy, then the other two covenants will begin to deteriorate rapidly.

Adaptations

One of the immediate connections with evangelism found in the marriage rite is the importance of the covenant uniting two families together. This is a great avenue and resource for evangelism and discipleship. On the one hand it allows two families to unite, with the opportunity of the couple to be able to evangelize to family and extended members on both sides who are not Christians. In addition, it also provides a means for the future parents to evangelize their biological children.

The Malagasy traditional marriage process is full of good opportunities for discipleship. The bride's mother is the one who trains her daughter to cook and clean clothes and the house. The Vezo Sara bride is trained for two months immediately following the marriage while living with her parents. After she has been trained effectively and all furniture is purchased for the new couple's house, the groom is instructed to come and take her home. The bride's parents are the ones who request the

groom to continue the training, especially in areas of respect and honor towards the father in-law and brothers-in-law. They are also the ones who demand that the woman be respected and protected from bodily injury. The model needs to consider using not only a spiritual mother or father, but also consider identifying spiritually mature couples that are able to disciple newly married couples rather than the priest, who may be either single or married, training the couple by himself during three or four sessions prior to religious marriage. It may be more beneficial for mature couples in the church to train these young couples prior to their traditional marriage, rather than prior to their Christian marriage. By the time a couple comes for a Christian marriage and counseling, the couple has already been together for many years and probably has children.

Rejections

Christians may generally have a hard time paying a dowry to get married. It sounds too much like the bride is being purchased. The difficulty may be because of the lack of finances or because a dowry sounds like a bribe or suggests that the potential bride is being degraded to the status of a slave. Slavery is unacceptable to Christians. However, Christians would confirm a marriage covenant if reciprocal for both parties.

Christians reject the idea that one needs to be married to be a leader in the church. The traditional Malagasy marriage implies that one needs to be married to be a leader. For example, one is not considered a leader in the community if he has not married nor had the experience of leading a family and accepting multiple responsibilities associated

with a marriage relationship. Traditional marriage gives the man the opportunity to exhibit and implement characteristics of a leader that the elders of the community will observe and confirm. Christians recognize that Jesus was never married and yet he is the head of the church. Church history has called many, such as St. Augustine, St. Gregory, and St. Francis, who became great church leaders, yet never married.

The Christian community would not accept the Kenyan tradition of men taking multiple wives and living in polygamous relationships. The Anglican Communion decided in 1988 during the Lambeth Conference at Kent University in Canterbury that polygamy was not the best situation for Christian marriage. Therefore, those who were in polygamous relationships before they became Christians were asked to continue in them in terms of their responsibilities of assisting the wives and the children. But only one was to remain as the man's wife in an intimate way. For those who were already Christian prior to marriage, they were asked to take only one spouse and live in a monogamous relationship. Christians believe that no man or woman should separate those who have been brought together in the union of marriage.

Christians would reject the idea that a child certifies a marriage. For the Christian, marriage is a covenant union of a man and woman and between the couple and God. Therefore, whether one has a child or not does not determine or certify the Christian marriage. God has brought the couple together and he has blessed their marriage in the collective community of saints regardless of whether or not the couple has children.

Elder Rite

In Madagascar, eldership rites are the highest-ranking earthly rites that one may enter into in the physical realm. Eldership is the most distinguished position one can receive in the community. The elder is given the greatest responsibility for overseeing the welfare and security of the community.

There are a number of different eldership positions: some are heads of their immediate families, some are the heads of their clans and function as chiefs, others are local priests, and yet others are local witch doctors. Each family needs to have an elder.

How do people become elders? Among the Masikoro, each clan has an elder by virtue of his hereditary, age and male gender. This is the only criteria for eldership selection. The elder is not chosen by the members, but rather by biological birth, following the pattern of monarchy rule. For example, for one to be a *mpisoro*, he must belong to a certain family in the clan. The oldest male is the *mpisoro* until he passes away. Then the next oldest male brother becomes the *mpisoro* until he dies. Once all of the brothers have passed away, the position of next *mpisoro* then reverts back to the oldest son of the oldest brother. Therefore one is born into eldership. One is not able to

reject this position. He must accept the new position and carry on his new responsibilities within the clan.⁴⁰

The position of the *mpisoro* is a distinguished one. Elders are honored and respected in the community; they are invited to all major gatherings and rites of passage and sit at the high places of honor. The *mpisoro*'s primary role is to grant blessings to the people who come to him and to teach, follow, and enforce the traditions and customs of the community. Therefore, he plays an important position of receiving the traditions and passing them on.

The *mpisoro* has a special shirt and scarf wrapped over one shoulder and tied around the opposite waist which he is to wear during special ceremonies and celebrations. During these same ceremonies, the future successor, the second in the line to be elder or priest, is to place on top of his head a china vase during the processions and to accompany the *mpisoro*.⁴¹

Elders benefit financially from their positions; they receive cows and money frequently for carrying out their duties and services to the families and communities. In addition, traditionally the Masikoro build a special house for the *mpisoro* where he

⁴⁰ Re, interviewed by author, Toliara, Madagascar, October 1, 2010.

⁴¹ Re, interviewed by author, Toliara, Madagascar, October 1, 2010.

resides and performs any functions necessary. The community is responsible for the upkeep of the house.

One disturbing fact about this position is that those lower in the pecking order to be the next *mpisoro* will try to murder the head *mpisoro*. It is common practice that those under the *mpisoro* will contact an *ombiasa* to ask and request what is the best way to murder the *mpisoro*. It is usually done through putting poison in the food or by casting spells on the individual. This is why the *mpisoro* always has an *ombiasa* present whenever he is attending Malagasy rites of passage. This is to protect him from other *ombiasa* who are trying to do evil and harm to him.⁴²

Christian Parallels

The Old Testament certainly had parallels to heredity leadership. For example in the case of the priestly line, Aaron and his descendants were responsible for the role of the high priest and priest; and, this was to be a lasting ordinance (Exodus 28:43). The Levites (Numbers 3: 5-8) were responsible to assist Aaron and his sons to perform duties and take care of the tabernacle. However, this doesn't appear to be the model that Jesus followed in the New Testament. Jesus' model for leaders was based on their faith in him. Jesus selected his leaders, brought them close to him, and taught them how to become

⁴² Re, interviewed by author, Toliara, Madagascar, October 1, 2010.

holy, spent time with them, trained them, sent them out, and asked them to do the same with others. But it was all based on a faithful and obedient commitment to serve Christ Jesus.

Christian leaders are respected and honored in the community. They are consulted frequently in Malagasy towns and villages on political, social and evangelistic issues. For example, when the Malagasy government was going through crisis in 2009, they consulted with the Christian leaders on how best to handle the political crisis. When the Eklesia Episkopaly Malagasy considered starting a new church in Morondava, Ft. Dauphin, and Morombe in southern Madagascar, the leaders approached the local ecumenical group (Reform, Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches) to consult with them as to whether it was a good idea to start a new church plant in these communities. The local ecumenical partners were very encouraging and supportive of the Eklesia Episkopaly Malagasy starting an Anglican church. They recommended the particular part of the cities where they perceived the greatest needs.

Christian priests and pastors are spiritual leaders not only at the local level but also at the national level. When the author was consecrated as bishop in 2006, the prime minister of the Republic of Madagascar said, "Today, you are now a national leader in

Madagascar. And you have a moral responsibility and authority to lead our people and challenge the government when it gets out of hand.”⁴³

Adaptations

Christian leaders in Leadership Course 301 are identified according to their calling, character, chemistry and competence to Christ and to the community. These four components of leadership are part of biblical tradition. Competence builds on chemistry with others, chemistry with others builds on character, and character builds on calling. Christian leadership begins with one’s calling. As new Christians enter the community, Christian leaders (the bishop, priests, evangelists, and lay leaders) take on the tradition and responsibility to identify, nurture, and equip emerging leaders. By the time disciples make it to stage three in the model discussed in this paper, their faith has solidified, the practice of their disciplines has matured, and their commitment to be leaders has increased.

It is at this stage where Christians begin to emerge as Christian leaders and are easily identifiable among the others with regard to their commitment to Christ and the church community traditions. The Apostle Paul directs the saints at Ephesus in Ephesians 4:1 to fulfill their calling by living in accordance with their character, “I urge you to live

⁴³ Prime Minister, Jacque Silva at the Consecration service at St. Laurent, Ambohimano, Madagascar, December 10, 2006.

a life worthy of the calling you have received.” Christian leaders must help emerging leaders to discern their calling either as a lay person or a clergy by looking at the lives of Abraham, Moses and Nehemiah. Then the Emerging leaders examine what Moses and Jethro did in Judges 18, what Paul identifies as the minimum characteristics for church leaders in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9, and finally what the writer of 1 Peter 5:1-10 says regarding elders and young men. By examining these passages emerging leaders begin to grasp what will be expected of them. The character of the Christian leader is critically important to the success of the Lord’s ministry, while a leader’s flawed character can undermine not only an individual’s ministry but also create problems within a church community that are difficult to address and resolve.

After discerning one’s calling and building one’s character, the emerging leader is encouraged to begin to examine how to further develop one’s positive chemistry and relationships with others. The emerging leader observes the different models for how best to deal with individuals, couples, and groups; they also study how best to choose a spouse, select and appoint leaders, run a church meeting, establish church and family budgets, reproduce leaders, and resolve conflict personally and in the church. In addition, emerging leaders undertake team-building exercises so that they begin to think creatively and outside the box, ascertain what gifts other people have to contribute, and further develop mature inter-dependence with others.

Rejections

For the contemporary Christian to accept hereditary as the main criteria for choosing leaders would undermine the calling of God to raise up independent leaders who are faithful to him. To select leaders based on hereditary weakens the emphasis that God places on calling all people to serve him in a wide range of roles and positions. To declare leaders founded on hereditary would segregate and show favoritism to a few. The good news is that all are able to come to faith in Christ and have potential to be an emerging leader based on one's calling, character, chemistry and competence.

Fatalistic, self-oriented, and violent strategies and actions are unacceptable in Christian leadership. The thought of a future successor wanting to eliminate his brother so that he could take over the leadership to become the next *mpisoro* damages the whole community's trust in God to call and place leaders in a particular place and time. Also, the author would have to reject the gender bias that only men may be leaders. The Malagasy have had a number of women in key leadership positions over the past 10 years in Government (Minister of Justice, Minister of Tourism, Minister of Health and Minister of Armed Forces). Local governments have also been governed by females; one example is the Mayor of Morondava). Even though there are good examples of female leadership in the modern Malagasy culture, the Malagasy ecumenical churches are divided over this issue.

Death/Burial Rite

The death (*maty*) and burial rite of passage is very important in Malagasy culture. The Malagasy people do not view death as an end in itself but rather as the continuation of life. This is seen in various terms used to describe death in African culture: “cease to eat,” “ceasing to breathe,” “fighting a losing battle,” “refusing food,” “shutting the eyes,” “being snatched away,” “being called away,” and “becoming God’s property.”

It is in death that the spiritual world intervenes in the human world. This is the time when the human body stops and the spirit continues and intervenes in the human world. This is the beginning of the ancestors (living dead) intervening in the lives of their family members. The deceased moves from a human form to a spirit form. These are the people who are closest to humans and to the divine (God). Mbiti calls these people “the living dead”.⁴⁴ The death and burial rite is the entrance to the highest level, position or status in the community. The Malagasy ancestors’ (*razana*) responsibilities are to be guardians, protectors, and blessers of the community’s customs and rites.

The Malagasy people’s traditional belief is that it is very important to take care of and appease their ancestors regularly, especially during the death and burial rites. To illustrate, the most famous and well known Malagasy ritual is from the Merina (highland people) ethnic group called the *famadihana* (the exhumation of the ancestors). This is

⁴⁴ Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion*, 118.

when the *razana's* remains (bones) are either cleaned and rewrapped or simply rewrapped in fine linen cloth (*lamba mena*). This is a special occasion which happens from July to September each year. It is a huge undertaking which is very expensive for the family. The *razana's* extended family sells cattle or other belongings in order to save enough money to host this event. When the day arrives, the relatives, friends and neighbors are invited and bring their *sao-drazana* which means thanks to the *razana*. One to three cattle are killed for the feast and entertainment is provided by the local *mpihira gasy* (traditional singers and dancers) who play the *razana's* favorite songs. Then one or many ancestors are wrapped or rewrapped with the *lamba mena* (burial wrap). The *kabary* (a profession speech) starts and ends the festival presenting the *razana's* biography, words of thanks to God and the guests, and a concluding prayer.

The rationale behind the *famadihana* is that the Malagasy ancestors believe that the *fanahy* (the spirit) makes the human being. The spirit is from God, differentiates humans from animals, and returns to God after death. This is why the *fanahy* is considered sacred. The *razana* is highly respected through the *famadihana*. In addition, the family's unity is highlighted in Malagasy ancestor society, whether dead or alive, because the *fanahy* is the basis of life and relationship.

It is an insult for the Merina people not to be buried in their *razana's* tomb. It is also an insult for the deceased not to be buried in the *razana's* tomb due to the refusal and prohibition by the ancestors or the parents. These are illustrated by the following quotation, "*Velona iray trano, maty iray fasana*." "Alive in the same house, dead in the

same tomb." The practice of the *famadihana* is an opportunity to unify the souls of the family members through the reconciliation and tolerance among them.

There are rites of passage for all those who die, with the exception of children and infants. The rite of passage is more elaborate for those who are older.

When a person (male or female) dies, a bull or two (*kanpiandra*) is killed so that the new ancestor will not ask for a bull in the future. Sometimes up to 50 cows are killed on this one day (not sacrificed) so their spirits go with the dead person. The purpose is that the dead person doesn't leave the community empty-handed. He leaves with something which belongs to him. Not all the deceased person's animals are killed. If the person (grandfather/grandmother) is old, then there is a big celebration. There is a *mpihira gasy* which comes and plays local instruments. At least one or two other cows are killed during the celebration to be consumed by the guests. The children are not allowed to eat the first or second cow. They do not eat anything connected with the deceased ancestor.⁴⁵

The body stays at the deceased person's house for a maximum of three days. Families and relatives are informed. The in-laws, sons-in-law, daughters-in-laws and

⁴⁵ Re, interview by author, Toliara, Madagascar, February 12, 2009.

grandchildren must give cows to the surviving spouse (if alive) or to his brothers. They eat *tokolava*, referring to the food at the big festival.

When the time comes to bury the person, a second bull (sacrificed for the ancestors) is killed at the tomb before they open the tomb. A short prayer is offered to the *razana*, “This is so the ancestors don’t ask for any more.” This is to appease and inform the ancestors and spirits in the tomb that they have a guest to leave with them. The bull is cooked and shared with the people.

Items belonging to the deceased person are then destroyed (which prevents looting) and buried (plates, spoons, gloves, cigar, shoes and etc.) with him/her. Relatives may give a gift such as gloves (maybe up to 100 gloves) to put in the tomb. If the gifts don’t all fit in the tomb, they are distributed to the grandchildren.⁴⁶

Malagasy tombs are typically square in shape and may contain up to 10 bodies. The tomb may have up to five women and five men, divided by men on the right and women on the left.

Only guests and relatives go to bury the deceased; they return to the village after the burial to inform the elders. The family and relatives give oil to the dead person’s brothers and sisters. They put oil on their hair as a sign of mourning, and they cry for

⁴⁶ Re, interviewed by author, Toliara, Madagascar, February 12, 2009.

about 30 minutes. Those who have cried for 30 minutes must cease their crying and are not allowed to cry ever again.

The relatives, if they wish, can eat a third bull. Everyone is allowed to eat this bull. Then they give blessings to those returning home. They give blessings for their safe travels.

The Sakalava Menabe ethnic group seeks out family members from both sides of the family to inform them about the recent death. Once the body has been cleaned and prepared by someone of the same gender, the hair is cut and new clothes are put on the deceased. People are asked to come and view the body and be part of the big festival. At the end of the festival, the body is laid in a hole in the ground facing east, preceded by the women sprinkling dirt on the body saying “Good bye.” According to custom, the body is not buried on either Mondays or Thursdays. It is very important that there is a *kabary* where the ancestors are asked to take care of the newest ancestor.⁴⁷ When one spouse dies, the other is to cut a piece of rope that symbolizes the separation of the two.

According to the Vezo Sara ethnic group, when the body is put into the grave, the local priest and the elders say to the ancestors, “This is your child, may your receive him properly. The child was ours and now it is yours.”⁴⁸ This saying seems to reflect the

⁴⁷ EG, interviewed by author, Morondava, Madagascar, January 30, 2010.

⁴⁸ Ras, interviewed by author, Ifaty, Madagascar, August 13, 2010.

burial rite of passage, moving from a human state to the great status of ancestor, the living dead.

Among the Masikoro, there is a special time of remembrance when prayers are offered to specific ancestors. They give the deceased a new name to remember him/her by at the burial, and the new name is written on the tomb. They will pray to him/her by using that new name.⁴⁹

Another way the Malagasy Merina group appeases the *razana* is in the construction of permanent tombs, while houses are seen as only temporary. This may explain why a Malagasy family will pay ten times more to construct a family tomb than a house. The Mahafaly and Masikoro make their tombs very elaborate with colorful pictures depicting stories about the life of the deceased.

Among the Vezo Sara, the “living dead” remain very active in daily life. For example, if someone dreams that an ancestor speaks to him and says he is cold and needs clothes or needs a cow, the family will have a sacrifice for him. In another example, if one wants to build a house, the owner requests that the ancestors bless him and make him successful first in the construction of the house and then bless all those that live and enter the house. A third example is when the Vezo Sara breed animals, such as cattle, goats and sheep, they must offer a thanksgiving sacrifice to the ancestors so that the ancestors

⁴⁹ Re, interviewed by author, Toliara, Madagascar, February 12, 2009.

will continue to bless the living.⁵⁰

It is very important that the family follow the requests of the deceased person. If not, it is believed that the deceased will haunt or curse the living relatives. If family members sense that they have offended the ancestors, they will ask for forgiveness and sacrifice a bull as an act of contrition.⁵¹

Death and burial rites are very important to the Malagasy people as these symbolize the entrance into the highest status in the community. These rites also keep the human and spiritual lives in union and at peace. The ancestors are the protectors and guardians of the African Traditional Religion. They are considered to have the highest authority and power in life. Therefore, Malagasy people believe that it is important to respect, honor, and obey what the ancestors have done and what they have said to the living.

Christian Parallels

In Christianity, it is the belief that when a Christian dies, his or her spirit is released from the body and lives for eternity with Christ. Christians are divided over where the spirit goes from the point of death. Does the spirit remain in the ground or go

⁵⁰ Ras interviewed by author, Ifaty, Madagascar, August 13, 2010.

⁵¹ Ras interviewed by author, Ifaty, Madagascar, August 13, 2010.

to eternity immediately? The Roman Catholics have suggested that some people have an intermediate state called purgatory. Regardless of where the spirit goes immediately following death, the Christian accepts the idea of eternal life; the spirit will live on in eternity either with God in peace or without Him with pain and suffering. However, eternal life is a possibility that is not expressed in Malagasy culture.

In a Christian context, seeking forgiveness and repentance are central to the message of evangelism. It is in receiving the good news of Jesus as Christ and Lord that one confesses sin, asks for forgiveness, and repents from the previous actions in one's life. It is now up to the individual to demonstrate true repentance by living up to one's words with one's actions and deeds.

In contrast, the Malagasy believe their ancestors will only live as long as people remember the ancestor's name, for as many as four or five generations. Once the name is forgotten, so is the ancestor. From that point on, the living dead no longer influence the living, either for good or for evil.

Adaptations

A significant adaptation is the intervention part of the model. It is not the intervention of the ancestors as in A.T.R., but rather the intervention of the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit in the lives of the Christian leaders and the Christian community. It is here where the Christian leader and community are able to discern the

will of God, grow in maturity, work together, and learn from each other. The Holy Spirit intervenes to empower, entrust, guide, and instruct leaders as to the way forward.

Malagasy burial rites have strong ties to the transference of leadership. For example, it is common practice among the Masikoro for the oldest son to hold the head of the father just before he is laid in the tomb as a symbol of transference of power from the father to the son. The son then takes on certain new responsibilities to the family and community. It is common in many Christian denominations to observe a similar transfer of power and authority when clergy or bishops are replaced in a parish or a diocese. Often there are celebrations (formal or informal) and special remembrances for those leaving positions of authority, as well as celebrations for the arrival of the new leader.

The Malagasy believe that these rites of passage are imperative to continue because the ancestors have passed these on. The customs are received from the ancestors through the elders and passed on to the family heads and then to the children from one generation to the next. It is in this life cycle that one actively participates in the perpetual and continual spiritual growth in the community.

Christians also continue customs established by previous generations of believers and have a responsibility to identify and nurture future generations of Christian leaders. Thus, both the Malagasy culture and the Christian faith value intergenerational continuity. Paul reminds the reader in 2 Timothy 2:2 of the importance of finding faithful

and trustworthy young men that one can mentor and reproduce into potential leaders with the expectation that new leaders would in turn reproduce others.

Rejections

Christians will refuse the belief that Malagasy spirits roam around the community influencing the Christian Malagasy for good or bad. To appease the living dead, many Malagasy will spend up to 10 times more on building a tomb than on building their family's house. Malagasy also believe that it is essential that those who are physically alive should continue to conduct themselves in such a way as to maintain peaceful and healthy relationships with one another and with the departed.⁵² The Malagasy don't want any angry ancestors causing them problems.

Christians generally have a difficult time accepting a second burial to complete the burial rites (*famandiana*). However, some of the Malagasy ethnic groups such as the Bara and Merina still hold to a second burial to complete the process. The Malagasy males from the Bara royal family in Isalo are buried in a temporary tomb until the family has raised enough money (usually 2-3 years later until the flesh has been detached from the bones) to have a proper week long celebration with the royal family and extended family. On the last day, the strongest men from the village gather the bones wrapped in a

⁵² J. N. K. Mugambi, *Christianity and African Culture* (Nairobi: Action Publishers, 2002), 102.

special burial cloth from the temporary tomb at the base of cliff, and take a newly built and painted coffin for the special occasion. The young men begin the treacherous and dangerous cliff climb just after sun rise without any ladders or special equipment. It is brute strength and wisdom that guides the young men as they carry the bones separately from the coffin. The climb is no easy task considering that it is over 450 feet straight up the cliff. The 15 to 20 young men drink local alcohol first to remove any fear before they begin the 3 hour climb. Once the young men reach the top, the body is then placed into the coffin and finally prayers are said.⁵³

Christians certainly will have a problem with only males being allowed as leaders in the community. Many believe men and women are created equally in the image of God and therefore by their right of baptism, women have equal opportunity to be called to serve as a leader in the Christian community. However, there are certain denominations which will not ordain women for leadership positions (priest and pastor) in Madagascar. Presently, the Lutheran Malagasy and four of the Eklesia Episkopaly Malagasy dioceses will not ordain women.

Summary of the Interviews

In summation, the interview process revealed that the Malagasy are very proud of their own cultural identity. This was expressed in their smiling faces and a sense of pride

⁵³ The author witnessed this event September 28, 2010 near the Canyon of the Rats, Isalo National Park.

when they talked openly about their own Malagasy traditions (*fomba gasy*). The rites among the various ethnic groups seemed similar on occasion and yet different in others. However, each ethnic group had unique aspects of the rites of passage traditions.

The author found that each rite in the Malagasy life cycle had at least one key theme (relational, instructional, covenantal, traditional and interventional) which was found in at least one rite and many times noticed in several rites. For example, establishing covenants was instrumental in the marriage rite. Building relationships were significant in naming, marriage, and burial rites. Passing on instructions were imperative in the initiation and marriage rites. Consulting and allowing the intervention of the ancestors was significant in the burial, marriage, and eldership rites. Following traditions were important in all of the rites.

There were a number of elements that could be adapted to the proposed model of reproducing Christian leaders within the context of evangelism, discipleship, and leadership. Some traditional Malagasy rites of passage appeared to have more relevance to the proposed model than others. For example, the birth/naming rite had more similarities with evangelism than did the initiation rite. The marriage and the initiation rites had more similarities with the proposed model's approach to discipleship than did the Malagasy burial rite. The eldership rite had some similarities with leadership. Finally, the burial rite had more similarities with leadership than the birth/naming rite.

One finding that was very clear in all three interviews is that among the Malagasy there is no formal rite of initiation to adulthood. When the author asked about this, there seemed to be a blank stare in the eyes of the interviewees. They had no idea what the author was trying to say or imply about the significance of a person passing from childhood to a new role or status as an adult. When asked how one becomes or is recognized as being an adult, one interviewee said “When the person takes a job or gets married,”⁵⁴ while others said there was simply no rite of passage into adulthood.

Outcomes of the Leaders Training Conference in Southern Madagascar

In the next three sections, the author will focus on the outcomes of the implementation of the African Model for reproducing Christian leaders as a bridge for evangelism, discipleship and leadership development.

The leaders in southern Madagascar have implemented Membership Course 101 in all parishes. All candidates 13 years and older who plan to be baptized must attend and successfully complete the Membership Course 101. This has become regular practice for all four parishes in southern Madagascar (including 25 churches) in 2009. However, this has created some uncertainty for those parents who have children who want to be baptized and for those children under the age of 13. It was initially envisioned

⁵⁴ Ras, interviewed by author, Ifaty, Madagascar, August 13, 2010.

that the parents with younger candidates (12 and under) would attend and complete Membership Course 101 before their children were baptized. But this part has not yet been fully implemented in the parishes. The bishop intends to prepare a letter to the parishes and churches re-stating that this is mandatory for all parents with a candidate under the age of 13.

One of the challenges is trying to make the teachings embodied in all the training modules (especially the Introduction and Membership course 101) as simple as possible. More than 50 percent of the participants (mostly lay leaders) did not pass the Membership 101 written exam given at the conclusion of the first offering of the course in Madagascar. The exam simply asked the participants to repeat the basic knowledge and information presented and introduced in Membership Course 101.

There were a number of reasons as to why the exam scores were low. First, the participants ranged from 18 to 60 years old, and the older participants had not taken an exam or attended an educational program (school) in over 50 years. A second reason was that the majority of the participants had less than a sixth grade education, so it made it difficult for many of them to write. Third, some thought they did not have enough time to prepare for the exam since it was given immediately following the conclusion of the training.

A fourth factor was the living conditions while attending the training. Participants mentioned that they were not able to get enough sleep at night because they

were either so excited in seeing and talking to others or because two to three people slept on one small mattress on the floor at the training site (a church in Toliara). Another reason was because some of the participants were new Christians and did not have any knowledge of the basics of Christianity. Finally, even though the Membership Course 101 curriculum is very basic, most of the instruction is theory in nature rather than practical, which created difficulties in comprehension for many of the participants.

Six months later, the participants from the Membership Course 101 returned for the next training offering entitled Maturity Course 201. The participants came ready to study and to take an exam. At the conclusion of the course, most participants passed the exam, and their scores overall were higher. As a result, the clergy took it upon themselves to spend time preparing their parishioners to perform better on this exam in the future. In addition, the content of the Maturity Course 201 curriculum is more practical rather than theoretical. Following this training, the leaders of the parishes began to implement Maturity Course 201 in their parishes in 2009 and 2010 as the required training of candidates for confirmation.

The implementation of this course has not been as successful as Membership Course 101 in terms of the number of participants completing the course. This is due to the fact that some candidates for confirmation were not able to finish this course before confirmation. The problem is that approximately half of the adult candidates desired to be baptized and confirmed on the same day. However, this is not possible or practical because Membership Course 101 is designed to be offered prior to baptism and Maturity

Course 201 precedes the confirmation rite. There needs to be a period of time for preparation for both baptism and confirmation as part of the person's journey of faith and for time in community with others desiring to be baptized or confirmed.

Another problem found in southern Madagascar is in the follow up to the training of candidates for confirmation. Frequently, the bishop is not informed that a candidate has not successfully completed the required Maturity Course 201 prior to the confirmation service. One solution to this problem is the preparation of a letter and a check list by the bishop informing all the parishes and churches of the confirmation requirements before candidates can participate in the rite. Part of this letter and check list will include a request that those adults seeking baptism should wait one year after baptism before being confirmed.

As a result of the implementation of Maturity Course 201 and a training program offered by a U.S.-based discipleship organization, some leaders in southern Madagascar have begun discipling other men and women. The author discipled three to four men on a weekly basis, while his wife discipled three women. A local priest discipled one to two additional men, while an evangelist discipled two men.

Most of the leaders in southern Madagascar have not yet been trained in the Leadership Course 301, which is designed to identify, equip, and inspire men and women to become Christian leaders in the community. At this time, only those who have gone through the evangelism training program in Toliara, Madagascar, have received the

Leadership Course 301 training. Therefore, the author recommends that all clergy, evangelists, and most lay leaders in the parishes be trained and successfully complete the Leadership Course 301 by the end of 2011. This will help solidify and refresh the core vision and mission of southern Madagascar in the hearts of the leaders at all levels.

The author further believes that all core leaders (clergy and evangelists) in southern Madagascar should attend three two-week training courses during 2011 to help better understand and implement the African Model for reproducing Christian leaders in the context of evangelism, discipleship, and leadership development. It is imperative that the Christian leaders place a strong emphasis on the lessons learned and knowledge gained from Leadership Course 301.

Outcomes of the Student Evangelist Training in Southern Madagascar

The outcomes of training the student evangelists in Toliara regarding the African Model for reproducing Christian leaders have been fully evident and most beneficial to the students and the church. Each one of the students from 2008 and 2009 has begun to implement Membership Course 101 and Maturity Course 201 in their churches.

At the conclusion of the two training courses, the students exhibited a greater understanding of the broader concept of the need and practical methods to reproduce Christian leaders. When they completed Leadership Course 301, the students had acquired and demonstrated a full measure of knowledge and comprehension of the

qualities and character of a good Christian leader and the challenges of living fully as a Christian leader.

One of the challenges in presenting the three training courses in the context of the student evangelist program was a lack of time to complete all coursework. For example, in 2008, three of the students did not finish the Leadership Course 301 course by the end of the program. The author recommends that those students unable to complete all the coursework be required to return for two weeks of training in 2011, thus completing all three courses as part of the student evangelist academic requirements.

Over the last three years, students that successfully completed the Membership Course 101 and Maturity Course 201 courses generally scored higher on the final examination than those who took the exam at the leader's conference in 2008. For example, out of the 23 participants over the three years, there were just three students that scored below 60 percent on the exams. The author speculates that these higher scores were the result of greater preparation and additional time before administering the exam. These students in the evangelist training program also exhibited a greater interest, passion, and aptitude for the course materials presented in Membership Course 101 and Maturity Course 201.

The author observed that the students were able to implement what they had learned in the Maturity Course 201 course. It was evident that the students were actively involved in daily devotions in church. They actively acknowledged that they are giving

of their time and talents to the church. The majority of them have also demonstrated obedience to the word of God and to their elders. Students willingly fasted weekly with other church members during Lent and participated in other significant activities in the life of the church, such as preparing for the diocesan Synod and for evangelism in southern Madagascar.

The students also have been actively involved in evangelism, not only while in residence for the training, but also while on internship and after completion of the training program. For example, Tomboasy (a former male student evangelist) is now starting a new church plant as an evangelist in a church seven miles from Ft. Dauphin. Dasicy has started a church in Andranomena (a part of Toliara), and Fidermana has started a church plant in Morombe. Each former student is discipling other students, though it is still unclear as to how successful this has been.

Those student evangelists who went through the six month residential and six month internship program have become the best advocates for implementing the model for reproducing Christian leaders in the context of evangelism and discipleship. When placed in churches or church plants, they are the ones who are actively preparing and teaching the Membership Course 101 for those who want to be baptized and the Maturity Course 201 for those who want to be confirmed.

There were challenges to be faced. For example, in 2010, the author removed two students from the evangelist training program as a result of immoral behavior

unbecoming of a student. Another challenge at this point is that none of those trained has shown sufficient evidence of implementing Leadership Course 301 in their churches or church plants. As a result, the author continues to encourage and remind the evangelists to prepare for and schedule future offerings of Leadership Course 301.

Modifications to the Program

As a result of the various stages of trial testing and evaluating the author's initial African Model for reproducing Malagasy Christian leaders, several modifications were made to the final version, as presented in Diagram 3, as a means of improving the content for greater comprehension:

1. A conscious re-tooling of the curriculum away from the focus on theory to a more 'hands-on' practical application approach. This was most evident in changes made to the Maturity Course 201 and Leadership Course 301 content.
2. A modification in the trainer's presentation style from a traditional lecture format to a more question and answer approach. This change resulted in greater interaction with the students during the training and also prepared the students and leaders to respond and interact more effectively to questions raised as they (the students and leaders) teach the courses in their churches and parishes in the future.
3. More fully developed content, delivery, and assessment measures for the Leadership Course 301. For example, the final version of this module highlights in detail the significance and depth of the role of working together through

positive interpersonal relations (chemistry in the community). A section was added that deals with the issue of choosing a spouse, a very significant rite of passage in the African culture. The course now includes a greater emphasis on reconciliation among members in the church and the steps required for success in this sensitive situation. One other section added in Leadership Course 301 was the subject of how to successfully lead a meeting. This skill is critically important in the workings of individual churches and parishes, as the leaders strive to manage the interpersonal as well as the administrative affairs and functions in the life of the church.

4. A move away from the theory of developing leaders in the modules to a more practical approach for implementation. The preceding is not a complete sentence. After the initial deliveries of this topic (particularly in Leadership Course 301), the author observed that students and leaders in general failed to comprehend or grasp the content presented. Most of this subject matter was geared to students with a higher level of educational attainment than present among the students and leaders. The curriculum was changed to provide more practical approaches and real-life techniques for developing the leadership qualities and traits needed for evangelism, discipleship, and leadership development.
5. Removal of the focus on fellowship in Maturity Course 201. The initial curriculum strived to emphasize the role of fellowship in developing African Christian leaders. However, the experience gained from initial offerings of Maturity Course 201 showed that there were few practical applications as a result

of the course and a general lack of purpose in this culture. Discipleship was used as a replacement for fellowship as the result of a shift in philosophy. This shift reflected the author's belief that the role of discipling others in a small group (2-4 people) is more desirable and effective than providing fellowship for larger numbers of people. As a result, all students were placed in discipleship groups to fully participate in the process, as well as to prepare them for future roles in discipling others. This modification to Maturity Course 201 has proven to be very effective.

6. Add two additional sections in the program, one on syncretism and the other on women in ministry. The one on syncretism would be introduced in the Membership Course 101 to train students on how to analyze and evaluate what is biblical and what is cultural and non-biblical, and what can be adapted or rejected. The women in ministry section would be added to the Leadership Course 301. This section would allow someone to look at the biblical role of women in the church and in the Malagasy culture.
7. Introducing into this model a program for an oral society. Therefore, one needs to look at how to implement a program in a non-literate culture. For example, to reach the majority of those living in southern Madagascar, one must consider using non-formal ways of education such as songs, storytelling, pictures and drama.

Recommendations for Future Development of the Model

The author believes additional work remains to refine an effective model to reproduce African Christian leaders drawing upon the traditional Malagasy rites of passage. A few suggestions and opinions are now presented:

1. Leadership Course 301 still has opportunities for modification to improve the content and the focus on practical applications. The author feels this course is in an evolutionary stage. There is a need for better ways to assess and evaluate the practical application of some of the lessons and techniques presented in the module. One possibility is to prepare a simple survey or questionnaire to be administered periodically after completion of the course. Another possibility is to design and conduct a post-training personal interview to gauge the retention and applicability of the curriculum, plus personal reflections on how the course personally impacted the student in his/her life in community and the ministry.
2. Add a section in Leadership Course 301 on Christian leadership and the Christian family. The subject of Christian marriage, including preparation for marriage, merits greater attention, particularly in the Malagasy culture in which marriage as a rite of passage emphasizes the role of covenants, the joining of two families, and the birth of children.
3. Provide for the presentation of a “Certificate of Completion” and signing of a written covenant at the conclusion of the full training program (the Introduction and all three courses). Both covenants and a certificate (some type of official

document) or a ‘certification’ status are highly valued in the African culture to signify and acknowledge completion of a program and worthy of some form of recognition to honor the successful student. This action would be followed by the signing of a covenant between the student and God in the context of the Eklesia Episkopaly Malagasy. This covenant becomes an outward sign of accomplishment (similar to the certificate), but more importantly it symbolizes a commitment and a responsibility to the church, the community, and to God.

Envisioning the Way Forward

The true value and worth of the model for reproducing African Christian leaders, and the resulting revival in the church to fulfill the Great Commission of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, is in the widespread implementation of the model. The author envisions a series of actions or steps necessary for this implementation to occur within the Eklesia Episkopaly Malagasy (and perhaps in other locations in the future):

1. Brief the bishops from each diocese of the Eklesia Episkopaly Malagasy to present the model and discuss the possibilities and desirability of introducing the training to their evangelists and clergy (and those students studying to become evangelists and clergy). This is a critical first step to gain the interest, approval, and support needed for moving forward.
2. Initiate conversation with the Rector of St. Paul’s Theological College about implementing the first level Membership Course 101. After finishing the course,

it is suggested that the college and board look at implementing the model at the theological college.

3. Send a representative from the Diocese of Toliara to two or three other dioceses to make a general presentation on the model. Those attending the presentation would include the bishop and a group of clergy, evangelists, and lay leaders. The purpose of the presentation would be to introduce the model for reproducing African Christian leaders in the context of the African Cycle of Life and to discuss its merits, usefulness, and applicability in Madagascar.
4. Invite a small group of clergy from another diocese to participate in a six-month training program (held in Toliara, Madagascar), where the model will be presented and discussed. At the conclusion of the program, the clergy would be fully versed in the practice and application of all modules and fully capable of implementing the coursework in their own churches and parishes.
5. Conduct a short-term “train-the-trainer” workshop in residence at Toliara. Attendees from other dioceses (principally clergy and evangelists) would participate in a comprehensive training with the intent of fully learning all elements of the model. These new “trainers” would then return to their home diocese and begin implementing the training program.
6. Prepare a comprehensive Training and Instruction Guide (or handbook) to provide the full curriculum to others. The guide would include the text of each module, the program outline, trainer’s notes and suggestions for teaching the curriculum,

sample handouts and teaching aids, and other tools to assist in teaching the module in other African locations.

Conclusion

Although this model is in the early stages of development, this author is convinced that ATR has components that can be adapted in a Christian context. In particular the emphasis on relationships in community, instruction, covenants, spiritual tradition, respect for elders and intervention have been adapted in the Eklesia Episkopaly Malagasy model for the reproduction of Christian leaders in southern Madagascar. In particular, the strong emphasis on conversion and evangelism of whole families and sometimes whole villages, the discipling of peer age groups, the support of the covenants in marriage, the long term mentoring by respected elders and the use of authority to guide young emerging Christian leaders, enhance the success of the leadership model and its effectiveness in reproducing leaders.

In closing, the African Cycle of Life is firmly rooted in the African Traditional Religion, with its diverse rituals, practices and customs of the local communities. These customs have been demonstrated locally from one generation to the next through ceremonial rites of passage such as birth, initiation, marriage, eldership, and death/burial. It is through these rites of passage that we can begin to understand the African cosmology and worldview from a context of evangelism, discipleship and leadership. As Kirwen says: “A truly localized African Christian Theology must address African issues and

values and must be constructed within the conceptual framework of African languages, religions and worldviews.”⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Michael C Kirwen, *The Missionary and the Diviner* (New York, NY: Orbis Books, 1987), xix.

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BP 408 601 Toliara MADAGASCAR

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EXPERIENCE

2007-Present Diocese of Antananarivo Toliara, MADAGASCAR

Area Bishop of Toliara & Assistant Bishop of Antananarivo

- Elected to start a diocese in Southern Madagascar with few resources in the poorest region of the 9th poorest country in the world

2007-Present People Reaching People Inc. 501(c)(3) Founder & Board Member

- Serves the poor in Madagascar in evangelism, education & economic development

2008-2009 St. Paul's Theological College Ambatoharanana Interim Principal

2004-2006 Diocese of Kerinyaga (ACK) Marsabit, KENYA Director-Mission & Evangelism

2003-2006 St. Paul's United Theological College Limuru, KENYA

Adjunct Instructor of Church Growth, Evangelism & Leadership

2003-2004 St. Julian's Centre (ACK) Redhill, KENYA

Assistant Manager - Introduced basic financial accountability practices

1992 – 2002 Diocese of Antananarivo, Madagascar

1998-2002 Ravinala Episcopal Church Ivandry, Madagascar, Priest/Pastor/founder

1991-2002 St. Paul's Theological College Ambatoranana Adjunct Instructor-Evangelism

1997-2002 SEFAMALA (School for Lay Training) Antananarivo, Madagascar

Founder & First Director

1992-2002 SAHASOA (Social Development Department) Board Member/Consultant

1992-2002 SAFIFI (Evangelism & Renewal Department) Board Member/Consultant

- Initiated, Coordinated, Implemented & Constructed Dispensaries for 100,000 people
- Led Strategic Planning & Implementation Processes & Raised Funds to Construct 9 Dispensaries, one Lay Center, Plant 10 New Churches & Build one new Cathedral
- Led 8 Evangelistic Mission Trips annually to rural areas to recruit student evangelists

12-10-06 Consecrated Area Bishop of Toliara, Asst. Bishop of Antananarivo, Madagascar

1-13-07 Installed Bishop of Toliara

1997 Ordained to the Priesthood, Archbishop Remi Joseph Rabenirina,

Diocese of Antananarivo, Madagascar

1996 Ordained to the Diaconate, Bishop John Said, Diocese of Southeast Florida, USA.

1996 – 2006 Canonical Resident

EDUCATION:

D. Min. (expected 5-2011) Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

Thesis-project: Revival, Discipleship & Evangelism

D. Div. & Cert. of Advanced Anglican Studies, Seabury-Western Theological Seminary

MA, Divinity Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

BA, Religion & Philosophy Roberts Wesleyan College

PERSONAL:

Marital Status: Married: July 27, 1985 to Patricia Cox McGregor

Two daughters: Corban: Dickinson College, PA. Charese: Ursinus College, PA

Nationality: American Age: 49 (2/16/62) Place of Birth: Burlington, Vermont, USA

Parents: Senator Thomas E. McGregor Sr. & Patricia Rock (both are deceased)